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[PRICE 10D.

" That elections of members to serve in parliament ought to be free."—BILL OF RIGHTS.

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TO THE
RT. HON. SPENCER PERCEVAL.
LETTER I.

Upon the "Appeal to the People," the "obligations under which the Crown is held," and upon the "Danger to the Church."

SIR,—As the series of letters, of which this is the first, may, probably, extend to a considerable length, I think it right to say, by way of preface, a few words, as to the light, in which I view the person, to whom they are, or will be, addressed.—As far as relates to private character, which always ought to be duly considered when we are estimating the worth of public men, I can, of course, possess no other knowledge of you than that which has reached me from mere report; but, it is generally believed, that, as to all the concerns and relationships of private life, it would be difficult to find a better man than yourself; and, in this belief, I sincerely join. As to public concerns, as there requires but very little more, in a minister, (for you are now *the minister*) of this country, than strict honesty, a clear understanding, common powers of convincing others, industry such as is necessary in common life, love of country, and resolution to do that which the constitution demands, I should have no doubt of your being fit for the situation, were I not afraid, that the lures of ambition and your want of intrinsic political weight, may possibly drag you along, step by step, in the paths wherein your predecessors, for twenty-three years past, have invariably trodden. That you would not voluntarily join in those deeds of corruption, which are such a disgrace to the government and the country, and which have, at last, brought the latter to the brink of ruin, political as well as pecuniary, I believe; but, when a man has once staked his fortune upon the maintenance of any principle or any party, and particularly if he has persuaded himself that to maintain the same is for the public good, he is very apt to yield to the solicitations of those by whom he is surrounded, and, when the necessity occurs, to regard the end as sanctifying the means.

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I do not believe, that, for the love of the thing, you would wish to see your country bent down under an inexorable tyranny; but, I may think, and I do think, that you are too much of the opinion, that fear, and not love, is the principle by which we are to be governed, and, of course, that your reliance, for the maintenance of the governing powers, is much more upon coercive than persuasive means. I believe, that (self-interest out of the question), you are extremely anxious for the preservation of the independence of your country; but I may fear, and I do fear, that, in the struggle for preserving your power, the means of effecting this greatest of all public objects will be frequently overlooked, or neglected. Having thus, Sir, frankly stated my sincere opinion of you, give me leave to add, that, as to myself, however erroneous any of my notions may be, there is not, in the whole kingdom, a man who would go farther than I would go to aid in the preservation of the throne, as established by the constitution of our country; that I wish for no *innovation*, and that I hold in abhorrence every species of popular outrage; but that, at the same time, it is with a heart-burning hardly to be described, that I see myself, or any of my countrymen, deprived, no matter how, of any of those liberties, which our forefathers enjoyed. To me it appears evident, that a dreadful storm is gathering over our country. The elements, which have been for years collecting, seem now to be upon the eve of producing their combined effect. Of precisely what nature this effect may be, no man can tell; who amongst us may survive it, it would be presumptuous even to guess; and, therefore, I am anxious, that, when the war of faction shall have been drowned in the terrific contests of which it is the mere forerunner, it shall, by some one or other, be said of me, that if my voice had been heard in time, the calamities of England would have been prevented.

With this motive, principally, it is, that I now address you upon two or three important subjects connected with the dissolution of parliament; and first upon the "appeal," which is said to have now been made to the

people.—The Lords Commissioners, in the speech, which they recently delivered to both Houses in the king's name, and by his express command, state, “that his Majesty “is anxious to recur to the sense of the “people, while the events, which have re-“cently taken place, are yet fresh in their “recollection;” and, that “his Majesty “feels, that, in resorting to this measure, “he, at once demonstrates, in the most “unequivocal manner, his own conscientious “persuasion of the rectitude of those “motives, upon which he has acted; and “affords to his people the best opportunity “of testifying their determination to sup-“port him in every exercise of the preroga-“tives of his crown, which is conforma-“ble to the sacred obligations under which “they are held, and conducive to the wel-“fare of the kingdom, and to the security “of the constitution.”—Here, Sir, are two positions clearly implied; first, that the wishes of the people are, or ought to be, consulted in the passing of laws; and, second, that there are certain obligations, or conditions, under which the prerogatives of the crown are held. Of the latter I shall speak hereafter, when I have inquired how far the measure here spoken of can, with truth, be called “a recurrence,” or appeal, “to the sense of the people.”

It will not be denied, that, in this way, at least, the sense of the people can be expressed only in their free and unbiassed votes for members to serve in the next parliament; for, as to any mere popular cry, that never can be considered as a mark of their opinion, and, indeed, it is well known, that no appeal of that sort can be, in such a manner made. In order, therefore, to form an accurate opinion upon the point, whether to dissolve the parliament, and to call a new one, be, in reality, to appeal to the sense of the people, we must endeavour to ascertain what number of the new members will be, or, indeed, can be, returned by the unfettered will, the unbiassed votes, of the people, or more properly speaking, of that now small proportion of the people, who have nominally the right of voting at elections for members of parliament. Mr Pitt, in a speech, made on the 7th of May, 1782, in the House of Commons, in support of a motion, made by himself for reforming that House, gave the following description of the then state of the representation.—“It is “perfectly understood, that there are some “boroughs absolutely governed by the “Treasury, and others totally possessed by “them. It requires no experience to say, “that such boroughs have no one quality of

representation in them; they have no share nor substance in the general interests of the country; and they have in fact no stake for which to appoint their guardians in the popular assembly. The influence of the Treasury in some boroughs is contested, not by the electors of those boroughs, but by some one or other powerful man, who assumes or pretends to an hereditary property of what ought only to be the rights and privileges of the electors. There are hardly any men in the borough who have a right to vote, and they are the subjects and slaves of the person who claims the property of the borough, and who, in fact, makes the return. Another set of boroughs and towns, in the lofty possession of English freedom, claims to themselves the right of bringing their votes to market. They have no other market, no other property, and no other stake in the country, than the price which they procure for their votes.”—Was this a true description, Sir, or was it a false one? And when, in the same speech, Mr. Pitt represented the House of Commons as “the mere tool of the ministers of the day,” was he guilty of factious falsehood; or, did he utter the sentiments of a man, as yet uncorrupted, as yet feeling for the liberties and honour of the country, as yet unaccustomed to disguise the truth? If, however, he did, upon this occasion, speak the truth, how can a dissolution of the parliament be, with sincerity, called an appeal to the sense of the people?

I shall be told, perhaps, that Mr. Pitt afterwards changed his opinion. With regard to the subject of his motion, with regard to the necessity of a reform, he might change his opinion; but, with regard to the state of the representation, the nullity of the people's voice; upon that we can admit of no change, without throwing upon him a charge of wilful falsehood. He spoke of facts, upon which he had full information, and, either he asserted what was false, or the state of the representation was what he described it; and this, indeed, he never did, as far as I recollect, ever attempt to deny. When steps were taken, at a subsequent period, by other persons, some in parliament and some out of parliament, to effect the object of his motion of 1782, he did, indeed, revile the movers as Jacobins, Levellers, and Traitors; he asserted, that the time was unfit for a reform; and he had recourse to all his means of terrifying the nation with the prospect of a bloody revolution; but, though backed as he was, he

never did, that I could discover, make any retraction as to the *facts*, which he had stated at the before-mentioned period, when he used his exertions *out of* parliament, as well as in parliament for effecting a reform, upon which subject I must beg your permission to enlarge a little; for it is quite proper, that the people of England should remember the deeds of a man, whose debts they have been obliged to pay; and for the rearing of a monument to the memory of whom they are now to be taxed.—It will not soon be forgotten, that, in 1794, a state prosecution, Mr. Pitt being then minister, was carried on by the then attorney-general, who is now lord chancellor, against Mr. Horne Tooke and others, who belonged to what was called the London Corresponding Society. The charge was that of *high-treason*, death was, of course, the meditated punishment. Yet, Sir, it clearly appeared, that the acts, and the views as far as could be proved, of this society, were exactly similar to those of a society formed in 1782, to which society Mr. Pitt himself belonged, and in which society he co-operated with this very Mr. Horne Tooke. When, upon this memorable trial for high treason, Mr. Pitt was called upon to say what passed in 1782, his recollection, as in the case of the money lent to Boyd and Benfield, appeared to be remarkably imperfect. He did, however, not deny his own hand-writing when it was shown to him; and, when the fact had been proved by others, he did acknowledge, that, at the period referred to, he joined in recommending, that an appeal should be made to the people, and their sense collected, *by parishes, or smaller districts*, with a view of effecting a reform in the House of Commons. The attorney-general, by a cross-examination, gave Mr. Pitt an opportunity of saying, that he never had approved of any "*affiliated societies*"; but, that there was no essential difference between the proceedings of the Corresponding Society and those without which the sense of the people in their parishes, or smaller districts, was to be collected, must, I think, appear evident to every unprejudiced mind. All the difference that could possibly be discovered was in the *times*; and this must have been matter of *opinion*. Mr. Pitt *might* think, that what was "*absolutely necessary to the safety of the nation*," when he was out of office, in 1782, would have been dangerous to the nation, when he was in office in 1794; but, Mr. Tooke and his associates might think the contrary; they might still retain their former opinions upon the subject; and, surely, to endeavour to

give effect to those opinions was not, by any body, and least of all by Mr. Pitt, to be imputed to them as a crime worthy of death? To the length of this digression I will only add a remark, that Mr. Wilberforce, was, in 1792, and about that time, one of the most zealous amongst those who sought a reform in the representation, as will appear more fully, when, upon a future occasion, I shall take an opportunity of referring to the papers of Mr. Wyvill and others, who united their exertions to those of Mr. Wilberforce and Mr. Pitt.

The political party opposed to Mr. Pitt, and, as we have seen, opposed to him merely as the possessor of that power and those emoluments which they wished to possess, have, at various times, given us their opinion upon the state of the representation, a reform in which they have constantly represented as a measure, without the adoption of which, no combination of talents, or events, could possibly produce any real and permanent benefit to the country. Of their abandonment of their principles; of their remaining a year in power without any attempt to effect this great purpose; of their language, which all along implied, that no reform, of the sort we are speaking of, was necessary; of the doctrine of their avowed advocates, who have asserted, that, for the House of Commons to be really independent of the crown is *mere theory*, and not at all conformable to the *practice of the constitution* in its *healthful state*; of their proceedings, during the election of 1806, specimens of which have been brought to light in the cases of Westminster and Hampshire: of these it is quite unnecessary for me to say any thing more than merely what is sufficient to call them to mind. Nor will I make a particular reference to any of their *opinions* relative to the necessity of a reform in the House of Commons. I will confine myself to the statement of facts, upon which they grounded their motions for a reform, which statement was, it was understood, drawn up by Mr. Erskine and Mr. Grey, which they offered to prove at the bar of the House, and which was expressed in the following words: "That seventy-one peers and the treasury nominated seventy members of the House of Commons and procured the return of seventy-seven; that ninety-one commoners nominated eighty-two, and procured the return of fifty-seven: so that, together, one hundred and sixty-two persons returned three hundred and six of the members. Besides which, twenty-eight members were returned by compromises, and seventeen boroughs, not containing one hundred

“ and fifty voters each, returned twenty-one members; those members together making a majority of one hundred and ninety-seven votes in the House.”

Now, Sir, whether the introduction of a hundred *Irish* members, the *patronage* of many of the boroughs they are returned for having been actually *purchased* by law, and with taxes raised upon the people; whether this alteration has produced an improvement in the state of the representation; whether an improvement has been produced by any other means; whether the open and public conversation about the proprietorship of boroughs; whether the numerous advertisements, for the sale and purchase of seats, which we daily read in the public prints, and for the publishing of which no man is ever called in question by the House of Commons, or by any body else; whether any or all of these amount to a sign of *improvement* in the representation, since the time, that Mr. Pitt and Lord Howick gave the descriptions that I have above faithfully quoted; and, indeed, whether their descriptions were true, or false: these are questions which I leave you, in your conscience, to answer. But, if those descriptions were true, and if no improvement in the state of the representation has taken place since those descriptions were given, I put it to your sincerity to say, whether, by dissolving a House of Commons and calling a new one, an appeal is really made “ *to the sense of the people.*” I put it to your justice, whether men ought to be reviled, and punished, as traitors, or seditious libellers, because they are discontented under such a state of things: because they wish for, and seek, an improvement in the representation; because, in short, adhering to the principles of that constitution, for the sake of which they are called upon to shed their blood, they desire that a dissolution of the parliament should, to use the words of the Speech, be a “ *recurrence to the sense of the people?*” And, I put it to your reason, whether the upholding of such a state of things, and whether such revilings and punishments, be the likely means of calling forth the zeal of the people, if need shall be, in defence of the government?

I am aware, that there are those, who hold the opinion, that the less weight the people have, the better it is; but, Sir, this is a question, which is totally set aside by the speech, which you and your colleagues have advised the king to order to be made upon this occasion; for, in that speech, as was before observed, you declare, in as clear a manner as possible, that “ *the sense of the*

“ *people*” ought not only to have some weight in the passing of laws, but in regulating the conduct of the king and his servants; you challenge, therefore, an inquiry, as to whether the dissolution of the House of Commons and the calling of a new one, be really an appeal to the free and unbiassed voice of the people; and, if the result of that inquiry be a decided and incontrovertible negative to the proposition, it will remain for you, in some still moment of your life, to ask yourself how we ought to qualify the *professions* contained in the Speech.

The second topic upon which I think it useful, at this time, to address you, is suggested by that part of the Speech, wherein the king, by the advice, of course, of you and your colleagues, speaks of the “ *obligations* under which the prerogatives of the “ *crown* are held;” that is to say, under which the crown itself is held; for, take away the prerogatives, and the crown is a thing to be estimated by the physical weight, and the nature, of the materials, of which it is composed. And here, Sir, believe me, when I say, that I am one of those, who would by no means wish to see diminished any of the justly exercised prerogatives of the king. Bolingbroke observes, and with great truth, that the real liberty of the people is in as much less danger from *prerogative* than from *influence*, as an open assailant is less dangerous than a secret assassin. When the kings of England exerted frequently, and boldly, their different prerogatives, we see that they were sometimes guilty of acts of injustice, and even of tyranny; but, we see also, that they had to deal with a *boldly resisting House of Commons*, and the final consequence invariably was, the asserting and establishing of the rights of the people. The Whigs, after they obtained a complete mastery over the king and the kingdom, introduced a new system, of which system, alas! we now feel the effects.

Of the *obligations*, under which the crown is held, we have, in varying phraseology, heard much, from different descriptions of men, since the agitation of the question respecting the catholics. The course of reasoning with all of them is this: “ That the placing “ *of the crown upon the heads of His Majesty’s illustrious family was, at the time, and has been and will be, in its consequences, the greatest of national blessings;* “ *that the only principles which produced that inestimable blessing were, the maintenance of the predominance of the Church of England, as by law established*

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" and the preventing of every thing tending to re-exalt the Roman Catholic Church ; " that Lord Howick's bill would have tended to re-exalt the Roman Catholic Church, " and would thereby have sapped the predominance of the Church of England ; " and, therefore, that Lord Howick's bill " was contrary to the principles, which placed the crown upon the heads of His Majesty's illustrious family ; " a conclusion perfectly correct, and indeed self evident, if we admit the premises ; but, except as far as is contained in the first proposition, (with which I presume not to meddle) all those premises I think that even I am able to disprove. But, before I proceed farther, let me put in my protest against the imputation of having, now that the ministers are out of place, become a supporter of them, and that, too, as some persons might say, merely because they are opposed to the servants of the King, who, in the modern style, are called *the government*. I am not, and never shall be, a supporter either of them or their bill. To support the one, indeed, is to attack the other ; for, they *withdrew the bill*, and therein pronounced a condemnation, either of the bill or of themselves. I have, for the reasons which I have more than once stated, always regarded the bill as likely to produce, neither immediately nor remotely, any harm or any good. I rejoice, for the reasons that I have before stated, that your predecessors were turned out of office ; but, it by no means follows, that I am to join in a cry, which, apparently, for no other purpose than that of public delusion, has been set up against the measure which was the cause, or pretended cause, of their dismissal. Them I accused (the *Whigs*, I mean) of public delusion ; and, from whatever quarter it may come, my hatred of the thing is always the same.

Coming now to the proposed discussion, who that was a stranger to our laws and history, would not, upon hearing the language of the Speech, and of the divers addresses to the King, recently delivered, imagine, that, when the crown of this kingdom was transferred from the Stuarts to the Guelphs, the sole condition with the latter was, *that they should suffer no relaxation in the then existing laws relating to the Roman Catholics*? To hear these addresses, and, indeed, to hear the language of all those that opposed the late ministry, or that intend to support the present ministry, who would not suppose, that the revolution in the reign of James II., was produced by a dispute about religion solely ; and, that the crown was transferred to the present family merely for

the sake of preventing the return of papal power or influence ? Yet, Sir, nothing can be further from the truth. Popish bigotry was only a part, and a very small part, of the objections which the people of England had to that king, who was a wilful, obstinate tyrant, without the cunning, which some tyrants, of more inveterate baseness, have, to disguise their rapacity and their cruelty. That he was a real bigot, and no *hypocrite*, there can be little doubt ; and, the nation would have done well in getting rid of him, if he had had no other fault ; for he was beginning to crowd his court and the country with greedy foreigners, under the name of priests, and, under whatever name they might come, they were, and in all cases must be, a grievous curse to any nation. But, that his crimes were not confined to tyranny in religious matters, will manifestly appear from the following list of them as recorded in that famous act of parliament, which was passed in the first year of the reign of William and Mary, and which is commonly called the *Bill of Rights*.

" Whereas the late King James the Second, by the Assistance of divers evil Counsellors, Judges, and Ministers employed by him, did endeavour to subvert and extirpate the Protestant Religion, and the *Laws and Liberties* of this Kingdom.

" I. By assuming and exercising a Power of dispensing with and suspending of Laws, and the Execution of Laws, without Consent of Parliament.

" II. By committing and prosecuting divers worthy Prelates, for humbly petitioning to be excused from concurring to the said assumed Power.

" III. By issuing and causing to be executed a Commission under the Great Seal for erecting a Court, called, the Court of Commissioners for Ecclesiastical Causes.

" IV. By *Levying Money* for and to the Use of the Crown, by Pretence of Prerogative, for other Time and in other Manner, than the same was granted by Parliament.

" V. By raising and keeping a Standing Army within this Kingdom in Time of Peace, without Consent of Parliament, and quartering Soldiers contrary to Law.

" VI. By causing several good Subjects, being Protestants, to be disarmed, at the same time when Papists were both armed and employed contrary to Law.

" VII. BY VIOLATING THE FREEDOM OF ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO SERVE IN PARLIAMENT.

" VIII. By Prosecutions in the Court of King's Bench, for Matters and Causes

“ cognizable only in Parliament; and by divers other arbitrary and illegal Courses.

“ IX. And whereas of late years, *partial, corrupt, and unqualified persons, have been returned and served on Juries and Trials, and particularly divers Jurors in Trials for High Treason, which were not Freeholders.*

“ X. And excessive Bail hath been required of Persons committed in criminal cases, *to elude the Benefit of the Laws made for the Liberty of the Subjects.*

“ XI. And excessive fines have been imposed; and illegal and cruel punishments have been inflicted.

“ XII. And several Grants and Promises made of Fines and Forfeitures, before any Conviction or Judgment against the Persons, upon whom the same were to be levied.

“ All which are utterly and directly contrary to the known Laws and Statutes, and Freedom of this Realm.”

Such, Sir, were the crimes of James II. Whether, in any other reign, laws have been dispensed with, or suspended; whether, in any other reign, money have been levied, or expended (which is exactly the same thing) for other purposes than those for which it was granted; whether the freedom of elections of members to serve in parliament has, no matter how, been violated; whether there have been any packed juries, especially for the trial of those who were charged with crimes connected with politics; whether the laws for the protection of personal liberty have been eluded, and men kept in prison for years without any trial, from first to last; whether fines and forfeitures have been held out as inducements to every man to betray and to swear against his neighbour; whether these things have taken place in any other reign, I must leave you, who are, of course, better acquainted with such matters than I am, to say; but, I think, it must be allowed, that, when we see that they existed in the reign of James II., we need seek for no other cause of his being driven from his throne. That he was a bigot, and that the church, so soon after the days of popery, were justly alarmed, is true; but, that his other crimes were of a much greater magnitude, we need only read the list of them to be satisfied. And, as to the *declaration of rights*, which follow the above list of crimes, not a single word do they contain upon the subject of religion.

“ I. That the pretended Power of suspending of Laws, or the Execution of Laws, by regal Authority, without consent of Parliament, is illegal.

“ II. That the pretended Power of dispensing with Laws, or the Execution of Laws, by regal Authority, as it hath been assumed and exercised of late, is illegal.

“ III. That the Commission for erecting the late Court of Commissioners for Ecclesiastical Causes, and all other Commissions and Courts of like Nature, are illegal and pernicious.

“ IV. That levying Money for or to the Use of the Crown, by Pretence of Prerogative, without Grant of Parliament, for longer Time, or in other Manner than the same is or shall be granted, is illegal.

“ V. That it is the Right of the Subjects to petition the King, and all Commitments and Prosecutions for such petitioning are illegal.

“ VI. That the raising or keeping a Standing Army within the Kingdom in time of Peace, unless it be with consent of Parliament is against law.

“ VII. That the Subjects which are Protestants, may have Arms for their Defence suitable to their Conditions, and as allowed by Law.

“ VIII. That Elections of Members of Parliament ought to be free.

“ IX. That the Freedom of Speech, and Debates or Proceedings in Parliament, ought not to be impeached or questioned in any Court or Place out of Parliament.

“ X. That excessive bail ought not to be required, nor excessive Fines imposed; nor cruel and unusual Punishments inflicted.

“ XI. That Jurors ought to be duly impanelled and returned, and Jurors which pass sentence upon Men in Trials for High Treason ought to be Freeholders.

“ XII. That all Grants and Promises of Fines and Forfeitures of particular Persons before Conviction are illegal and void.

“ XIII. And that for Redress of all Grievances, and for amending, strengthening, and preserving of the Laws, Parliaments ought to be held frequently.”

These, Sir, were the principles, which produced the revolution of 1688; and, though the maintenance of the protestant established church makes a part of them, it is, as I said before, a very inconsiderable part. The people of England saw, that, unless they overset the power of James II., they must become slaves, and, therefore, they drove him, and most justly, from the throne. Whether they acted wisely as to the appointing of his successor, is a question which I pretend not to discuss.

Out of these principles grew the *Act of Settlement*, as it is usually called, which

was passed in the second year of the reign of William and Mary, and which was occasioned by the prospect of a total want of heirs to the crown from either Queen Mary or the Princess Anne, afterwards Queen Anne. By this act, which is entitled an act for *limiting* the crown, it was placed upon the heads of his Majesty's family; and, let us see, therefore, what were the principles by which it was so placed, and what were the conditions, and "obligations," to use the word of the Speech, under which it was to be held. Let us see if there was any obligation, either expressed or implied, that no relaxation should, thereafter, take place, under any circumstances whatever, in the laws and regulations relative to the Roman Catholics; but, first, let us fix well in our memory, that the act we are about to quote was, "an act for the further *limitation of the crown, and better securing the rights and liberties of the subject,*" saying, in its title at least, not a single word about either the protestant or the popish religion. This act, after providing, that the king, or queen, in future, should take the coronation oath, as prescribed by a former act of parliament, of which oath I shall speak by-and-by, it proceeds to make the following further provisions for "securing the religion, laws, and liberties of the kingdom."

"That whosoever shall hereafter come to the Possession of this Crown, shall join in Communion with the Church of England, as by Law established.

"That in case the Crown and Imperial Dignity of this Realm shall hereafter come to any Person, not being a Native of this Kingdom of England, *this Nation be not obliged to engage in any War for the Defence of any Dominions or Territories which do not belong to the Crown of England, without the consent of Parliament.*

"That after the said Limitation shall take effect as aforesaid, *no Person born out of the Kingdoms of England, Scotland, or Ireland, or the Dominions thereunto belonging (although he be naturalized or made a Denizen, except such as are born of English Parents) shall be capable to be of the Privy Council, or a Member of either House of Parliament, or to enjoy ANY OFFICE OR PLACE OF TRUST, EITHER CIVIL OR MILITARY, or to have any Grant of Lands, Tenements or Hereditaments from the Crown, to himself or to any other or others in Trust for him.*

"**THAT NO PERSON WHO HAS AN OFFICE OR PLACE OF PROFIT**

"UNDER THE KING, OR RECEIVES A PENSION FROM THE CROWN, SHALL BE CAPABLE OF SERVING AS A MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

"And whereas the Laws of England are the Birthright of the People thereof, all the Kings and Queens, who shall ascend the Throne of this Realm, ought to administer the Government of the same according to the said Laws, and all their Officers and Ministers ought to serve them respectively according to the same."

These, Sir, were the principles which placed the crown upon the heads of his Majesty's family; and here, and no where else, are we to look for the "obligations," under which, as it is said in the speech, the crown is held. It is true, that one of these obligations is, that *the king shall join in communion with the church of England*; but no obligation is there expressed; no obligation is there implied, that the king shall refuse his assent to any law for bettering the condition of his Roman Catholic subjects.—You will see, Sir, that I have distinguished certain parts of this quotation by italic characters; and I ask you, *whether this nation has not been obliged to engage in wars for the defence of dominions which do not belong to the crown of England, without the previous consent (for any other consent is absurd) of even modern parliaments?* I ask you, *whether foreigners have not been suffered to fill offices of trust, and of emolument, civil and military?* I ask you, *whether no person who has an office or place of profit under the king, or receives a pension from the crown, is capable of serving as a member of the House of Commons?* I shall be told, that this latter part of the provisions above quoted has been *repealed* by a subsequent act of parliament; but this only shews, that, unless the repeal was a most daring violation of the rights of the people, the repeal of no law relative to the Roman Catholics can be held as any very daring violation. If this, the far most important, in my opinion, of all the "obligations," under which the crown was held, could be done away by an act of parliament, why could not any other of the obligations be done away by the same authority? There is, neither in the act of settlement, nor in any act of parliament now in existence, or that ever was in existence, no prohibition, no restriction whatever, with respect to a relaxation of the laws relative to Roman Catholics. Upon what ground, then, is it pretended, Sir, that the enabling of the king legally to promote Roman Catholics to certain

ranks in the army and navy, would have been contrary to the "obligations," under which his crown is held?

Thus, Sir, by doing little more than merely quoting from the great constitutional laws of the kingdom, I have, I think, clearly shewn, that the principles, "which placed the crown upon the heads of his Majesty's illustrious family," were not, as is assumed by the clerical and other addressors, solely those "of maintaining the predominance of the Church of England, and the preventing of every thing tending to re-exalt the Roman Catholic Church." In my next, I shall endeavour to shew, that Lord Howick's bill would have had no such tendency as that which has been attributed to it, and which I have expressed in the succeeding proposition. This I should do now; but, the language and conduct of the Universities, and of some other bodies of the clergy in particular, together with what has been called, and, I must say, not improperly, "the *miscreant* cry of NO PROPERTY," demand a more full exposure than, at present, I have room for.

I am, Sir,
Yours, &c. &c.
WM. COBBETT.

Botley, 14th May, 1806.

TO THE
FREE AND INDEPENDENT ELECTORS
OF THE
CITY AND LIBERTIES OF WESTMINSTER.
LETTER XVI.

GENTLEMEN,

In my last letter I took leave of you, thinking that it was not likely that any thing I could say further would tend to the promoting of your views for the good of your country; but, the turn things have taken, induces me once more to address you.

—The excellent stand which you are making for the rights and liberties of Englishmen is absolutely without example in the annals even of this, once so famed land of freedom. If you succeed in causing Sir Francis Burdett to be returned to parliament, you will have done more for the country, in the space of fourteen days, than has been done for it, during the last hundred years. It will, as Mr. Jennings has so well stated it at the hustings, convince those who have so long set the voice of the people at defiance, that there is "still a *Public* in England." And, as to the object of your choice, who will, be assured, soon possess the confidence of every good man that is now prejudiced a-

gainst him, he, too, will now be convinced, that the people, the real people of England, whose voice you speak, are still worthy of his best exertions in their behalf; which exertions he will not, if he has life and health, fail to make.—It is, and long has been, my settled opinion, that he was not only the fittest person to represent you; but that, without him in parliament, there was to be reasonably expected no good whatever from any other man; and this opinion I have expressed to all the persons, without a single exception, with whom I have communicated upon the subject, and to those of them, who have thought that I might be of some service in London at this time, I have uniformly declared, that, unless he was to be chosen, all efforts at the election would be useless to the country.—Judge then, Gentlemen, of the pleasure that I derive from seeing him at the head of the poll; and especially when I consider the manner, in which he has there been placed. Judge, too, of the anxiety which I feel upon the subject, and the dread I have, lest the floods of corruption, ready to be poured forth upon every emergency, may yet overwhelm you.

—To him, to his talents, to his political courage, to his justice, to his wisdom, to his merciful turn of mind, and to the influence which he has over the minds of all those who come near him, I look, not only for a reform of abuses, but for the safety of persons and of property, if a time of trouble should arise. His enemies persist, notwithstanding the numerous proofs to the contrary, that he wishes to overturn the constitution of England; but, be you assured, that, if you return him to parliament, the whole nation will be convinced, that his object is to *restore* and *re-establish* every good thing that has been lost or laid prostrate, and to destroy nothing but that which no man, however corrupt he may be, will dare *openly to defend*. The venal prints, and especially the Morning Chronicle, continue to accuse him of being a *mere instrument in the hands of others*. This, were it true, would be of little consequence. But, the contrary has been proved in so many ways, and so clearly proved, that to persevere in the accusation is peculiarly malignant. This malice, however, will no longer answer its end; nor do I believe, that if the gentleman, who is represented as having such absolute power over Sir Francis Burdett, were once more to stand forward in public life, he would, in a short time hence, meet with any of the prejudices, which have heretofore existed against him.—I am delighted beyond mea-

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sure at perceiving, that the cry of "No Power;" that delusive and serpent-like cry, has had no effect upon your minds. You have been deluded by neither party. You have seen the thing in its true light. You have perceived it to be a mere contest for who shall most largely and securely prey upon the public. This contest has opened the way for you, and you have manfully resolved to enter it if possible.—The public spirit, the *real* loyalty, the industry, the zeal, the intelligence and perseverance of the gentlemen, who compose the committee for conducting the election of Sir Francis Burdett, I was well acquainted with during the last struggle; but, *of the whole* of their conduct upon this occasion it is impossible to speak in terms adequate to its merit.—I lament most deeply that any thing should have happened to embitter these moments of the brigthest hope; I lament still more, that any of those, who at any time co-operated with me, should have been led, by private pique, to endeavour to thwart the great purpose you have in view, and thereby to have given me reason to fear, that, while *country* was upon their lips, *self* was at the bottom of their hearts. Let us hope, however, that they will *now* desist from their efforts; efforts which will not even produce the mischief they appear to intend; efforts which will not even prevent the good which they appear to grudge their country; efforts which cannot possibly have any other effect than that of adding to their own disgrace. At any rate, whatever may be their conduct, let them be assured, that their *complimenting me*, and particularly at the expense of Sir Francis Burdett, will receive, as it merits, nothing more than my contempt. Let them recollect, that my constant precept has been, *to sacrifice every private feeling and every private interest to the public good*. How many times, and how earnestly, have I repeated this precept! a precept which I have, I trust, enforced by my example. What ground, then, can there be for expecting me to approve of, or not openly to censure a line of conduct, in which the public good is manifestly sacrificed to private, yea, and to most unjust revenge? More particularly, at this time, I shall not speak upon this subject; and, my sincere and anxious wish, is, that I may never find it necessary to speak upon the subject again.—To the *subscription*, which the committee have set on foot, I shall contribute according to my very moderate means, and, Gentlemen, it requires nothing more than a very moderate contribution from *every man* of us, in order

to answer all the legal purposes even of a contest such as you are now supporting. But, *every man* must contribute. The necessary expenses of printing alone are considerable, and without printing intelligence cannot be communicated. Were it merely for the honour of Sir Francis Burdett, surely he who has suffered so much for the people of England, would have some claim upon their pecuniary exertions now. But, it is for our own honour, for the liberties and the independence of England, that these exertions are demanded; and, how base must that man be, who, for these objects would not sacrifice a part, at least, of his personal gratifications?—Upon your efforts depend, as I have before said, the political destinies of our country, and that these efforts may be completely successful is the anxious prayer of

Your faithful friend,
And obedient servant,
WM. COBBETT.

Botley, 14th May, 1807.

PUBLIC MEN.

CIVIS'S 1st LETTER.

SIR,—It is no less the reproach of our public men, than the misfortune of the state, that their conduct, whether in or out of office, is almost universally dictated, rather by motives of individual advancement and party views, than by a sincere, disinterested ambition to promote the general interests of the empire. To obtain the possession of power, and to maintain themselves therein, when acquired, are the grand objects of their desire and exertions. Each party professes to pursue the course that would best insure the national welfare; but all parties are faithful to that course, by which their own views, and those of their party may be most likely to be promoted. In the contest for places and the good things of office, a decided opposition of principles, as well as measures, is necessary, if not natural. What at first may have been, but the arbitrary means of annoying an adversary, must, in the progress of a political contention, become the peremptory creed of the state litigant. Self occupies so large a portion of a modern statesman's consideration, that he will not hesitate to sacrifice the public interests to his individual consistency. Hence the extraordinary and alarming fluctuation in the principles of government and the character of public measures, within a very few years. The present is the fifth administration, in succession, in the short interval, that has elapsed, since the union with Ireland. No two have agreed, either in principles or

practice. Each succeeded to power hampered with their declarations in opposition, and consequently, each, with the exception of Lord Sidmouth's first year's essay, proceeded upon different principles of policy. Whether any one of these evanescent administrations composed a wise or efficient government, it is not for me to determine; but I have no hesitation to say, that they could not all have been right in the adoption of such opposite and contradictory measures. They have been the pageants of their day; the Ogre and Little Thumb succeeds Mother Goose; the unthinking herd is amused by the novelty; but to reflecting minds the instability of government and public measures presents an alarming symptom of debility, and an unhappy presage of what the country has to look forward to, unless some appearance of vigour at length be manifested to counteract such evidence of decay. It is not to be denied, that each party, on its accession to power, has shewn a most consistent attention to party objects. Their own interests and the promotion of their connections have been, uniformly, the first objects of their care, and the constant aim of their anxious solicitude. Political integrity, like the magnet, is invariable in its direction, unless diverted from the line of attraction, by the influence of some adventitious cause. Considerations of individual or capricious consistency, and party views, like the nail that draws the needle from its proper direction, divert the attention of the statesman from the only legitimate object of his care, the public good. But it is not the apostacy or perverse consistency of public men, that is to be considered most alarming, in the events that have lately taken place; it is the inconsistency of parliament. We have seen the same parliament supporting two successive administrations, formed upon different principles, and professing opposite notions of policy and government. Either may be right or wrong, but parliament cannot be consistent in supporting both. If the representatives of the people are to go over to every administration that may be formed, *en masse*, the right of election is nugatory. The crown, in effect, would, in such a situation of things, absorb the functions of the commons branch of the legislature. The only difference that would then exist between this important member of the legislature of a free country, and the French senate, the abject instrument of the will of a despot, would be, that the people would be insulted by the mockery of choosing representatives, who were not to declare their voice, but to submit to the mandates of the

minister of the day. A parliament, capable of such pliability, well deserved the reproach contained in the arrogant insinuation of Lord Castlereagh, in the debate of Wednesday last, that, out of the pale of the late and of the present government, there was no third class of men from which an administration could be formed. The modesty of this observation is truly unique and unparalleled. The late administration were said by their partisans to comprehend all the talents of the country; a silly boast, which the members of that administration ever disclaimed, whatever may have been their other demerits. No person was more forward in reprobating the insolent vanity of such a pretension, than Lord Castlereagh. But was his lordship's indignation the result of any generous feeling, for the character of an enlightened nation, insulted by such a presumptuous assertion? No! no! In his lordship's bosom there is no place for these un-party-like sentiments. Conscious of his own abilities, and of the great, though unobtrusive, merits of those with whom he acted, he felt a personal and a party mortification at the sentence of exclusion against them. *Hinc illæ lachrymæ.* But no sooner is his lordship restored to office, than he asserts his claim to a pre-eminence of talents. It was said of the late ministers, that they comprehended all the talents of the country. This Lord Castlereagh denied, and the late ministers disclaimed. Yet before his lordship feels warm on the Treasury Bench, he modestly proclaims to the parliament and the country, that there are no talents in either, out of the circles of the late and present administration. The Greeks called all nations barbarous but their own: the Romans adopted the sweeping exclusion, excepting only the Greeks; but both the Greeks and the Romans were ignorant of the existence of the great Empire of China, more populous than both, and as highly civilised as either. Do then the present or the late ministers flatter themselves that either, or both include all the talents of the country? Can they suppose, that, because they comprehend all the brawling scramblers for places and preferment, they contain all the enlightened intellect, all the profound political wisdom of the nation or the parliament? The opinion is too extravagant even for the vanity of egotism to entertain, or the credulity of an heedless public to subscribe to. There are and must be many sets of men in this nation, as capable of conducting its affairs, as either the present or the late men. It is no frothy declamation, or contentious power of debating, that constitute a sound

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politician or the able statesman. That comprehensive acquaintance with the states of Europe, that clear perception of the positive and relative interests of this country, those enlightened principles of government, that harmonise the rights of the people and the prerogatives of the crown, and the enlarged and luminous views upon all the varied relations of a great empire, which are the only solid foundation of political wisdom, are to be found eminently united in numberless persons, who have never engaged in the scandalous contest for promoting private objects by the attainment of power. The public has seen administration succeed administration, in more rapid succession, and with less interest or concern, in the last seven years, than at any former period of our history. Whence this apathy? Is it, that the crisis is less difficult, or the duties of legislation and government less embarrassing, than on those past occasions, when the inhabitants of this country were tenderly alive to every variation of policy in their rulers? Are the fears of the people lulled by their consciousness of security, or does the nation shut its eyes to its danger from an implicit and just confidence in the abilities and integrity of its governors? Far from it. The crisis of the times has never been so momentous, but unfortunately the rapid revolutions of administrations and measures has fatigued the solicitude of the public, and neutralised those truly British feelings, that gave every inhabitant of this land of freedom a warm interest in the administration of public affairs. The profligate selfishness of public men, and the unexampled instability of government have destroyed every source of just confidence. We cannot trust to those, who commence their administration by taking care of their own interests, and whose probable duration in office may not afford them any opportunity of doing any thing effectually for the public interest. When this preposterous course of preferring private objects to public duty is uniformly pursued by each successive administration, when at a time of great difficulty and danger, requiring all the extraordinary resources of the state to be brought into activity, the public is scandalised and disgusted at the mercenary and grizing conduct of public men; when even their measures are framed, as much with a view to their selfish objects, as to the interest of the state, it is absolutely impossible, that the nation should be duped into a surrender of its confidence to hollow professions of integrity, against such conclusive evidence of political profligacy. The measure for admitting dissenters of every description to all

ranks in the army and navy was brought forward by one set of men, to strengthen themselves in office, and opposed by another with a view to the attainment of power. If the late administration had acted solely upon public grounds, the country would have the benefit of the measure, to which the King had given his assent; if the present ministers had acted from a sense of duty only, the public would not now have to despair of the accomplishment of a measure, which so far as it went, would have proved highly beneficial to the nation. The selfish objects of both parties have defeated the interests of the public, and sown the seeds of internal discord, at a time when universal union is so essential, by the revival of the acrimonious discussion of questions, which have ever hitherto turned upon an appeal from reason, humanity, and common sense, to prejudice and the worst of passions of the human breast. The extent of the mischief is not easily to be calculated; but one thing is certain, that, whilst, in the extensive sphere of our military operations in all quarters of the world, we have to contend with numerous and obstinate enemies, with elements, climates, and perhaps pestilential maladies, any policy must be ruinous, that would shut out one of the most abundant sources of supply to keep up the numbers of our army. But, I have been led too far by the warmth of my feelings. I had intended, when I began, to devote the greatest part of this letter to an impartial consideration of that measure, and the objections urged against it, in order to shew, that it was rather to be considered a great public than a limited Catholic measure. What I had to state upon that head shall be the subject of a future communication, if you should deem this deserving a place in your Register, and followed up in succession with statements respecting the actual state of Ireland, the causes of the frequent interruptions of its tranquillity, and the means of securing its internal quiet, the only possible mode of consolidating its union with this country.—*CIVIS.—London, April 20, 1807.*

POOR LAWS.
Containing Observations on A. O.'s first
Letter.

Sir;—As the revision of the poor laws is a subject at present under parliamentary review, and as it yields to no other in point of real importance, it would be natural that any letter appearing upon the subject in your Register should engage the attention of your readers; but when such a letter, Sir is fostered under your protecting genius and

stands recommended by a discriminating mind like yours, as a production replete with information, the public attention must be additionally excited: such had your recommendation upon me, Mr. Cobbett, but I am sorry it should fall to my lot to prove ungrateful for your kindness, and that I should be induced to say, what I do most unequivocally, that I have seldom seen a letter on a *grave* subject, in which the poverty of conviction and the abuse of words have been more evidently marked than in that of your correspondent A. O.—The attempt or rather the inclination of A. O., as I collect from the introductory part of his letter, is to *deify* the system of Mr. Malthus;—a system built upon propositions, none of which are distinctly stated, and none, consequently, distinctly refuted. I did feel the hope, Mr. Cobbett, from the late discussion, and from your sentiments upon the “learned languages,” that we had seen the vanity, the folly of idle declamation and unmeaning verbiage, and that we had learnt to appreciate language only in proportion as it conveyed manly argument and distinct clear ideas: but how much, Sir, of this sterling sense has the letter of A. O.? What principle of Mr. Malthus's does he investigate, which he takes the liberty of condemning? Really, Mr. Cobbett, but from your *known inflexible integrity*, I should be led to conjecture, that the champions for the “learned languages” had bribed you into an eulogium of a letter, that so evidently owes its birth to the clouded system of their education.—Sir, the condition of the poor has, for a series of years, occupied the attention of many men, whose minds have been both capacious and benevolent. It is the highest branch of political philosophy; and yet a subject of such peculiar delicacy, from the prejudice that pervades the minds of the millions who are interested in its developement, that very few have been found with courage and manliness enough to treat it with genuine impartiality, because they were aware, Sir, that the truth, by pressing on the claims of the many, who would thereby feel aggrieved, would give to the crafty sycophant, who is grovelling his way to power by the delusion of the multitude, an opportunity of raising himself in public estimation by a seeming benevolence, which could be only justly attributed to the man whose fame he would be enabled to ruin by insidious detraction. For this manliness alone, Sir, I say, whatever may be the result or the rectitude of the system of Mr. Malthus, he has a claim to our best thanks. You know, Mr. Cobbett, (no man better) that the greater part of the errors of the world

are only to be corrected by manly energy, unawed by popular indignation: such a censor has Mr. Malthus evinced himself; he has dared to give to the world what he has considered wholesome truths, though he saw the formidable host of gentle, compassionate, and sympathising souls, the members of Lloyd's Fund, together with the melting guardians of the Vice Society, all prepared with their weapons for his immediate destruction: but little did I think that you, Mr. Cobbett, would have joined in the cry of “hard-hearted doctrine.” What are the principles, Sir, on which this hard-hearted doctrine is founded? Let us hear them first *stated* and *refuted*, and then deal your epithets of proscription as fluently as you please. Let this treasurer of Lloyd's Fund, this city saint, (for such I cannot help thinking A. O. must be from his letter) state the basis upon which Mr. Malthus's system is built, and let him canvass the positions fairly and dispassionately, before he talks of “metaphysical distinctions, and the cobwebs of philosophy;” before he ushers into the world a declaration, that “Mr. Malthus has admirably reconciled the old quarrel between speculation and practice, by shewing that our duties and our vices both lean the same way, and that the ends of public virtue and benevolence are best answered by the meanness, pride, extravagance, and insensibility of individuals.” Is this the language, Sir, let me ask, adapted to the great purpose of an inquiry after truth? Is this the manner in which A. O. imagines a work which has cost the experienced and penetrative compiler many an anxious hour, is to be refuted? Sir, I challenge A. O. to produce any one position, put by Mr. Malthus, in which virtue is not endeavoured to be promoted, and vice diminished; in which the interests and welfare of the community are not anxiously endeavoured to be upheld, and the happiness and harmony of society to be advanced. I should not, Sir have lavished so much in generals, and which you probably may think I have done unnecessarily, but that I have a very different feeling from that with which you seem to be impressed, in respect of the intention of your correspondent A. O. You imagine, that when he mentions, at the end of his letter, his inclination of giving, in another letter, the *proof* of his assertions, that he is *ingenious* in making that declaration.—On the contrary, Sir, I firmly believe, that A. O. has no such inclination; that he never means to enter into an investigation of the reasoning of Mr. Malthus, but that his other letter, if another should appear, will be found, like

the present, to contain general assertions, copious detraction, and no one attempt to inquire into or canvass the principles laid down by the "check-population philosopher," as you have designated Mr. Malthus. But, Sir, that your correspondent may be driven from an ungenerous attempt of being opprobrious without argument, if he entertains such a wish, which I am prone to believe he does, I call upon him in his next letter to fulfil his promise, and fairly and openly to discuss the principles laid down by Mr. Malthus; and, Sir, that no misrepresentation of that gentleman's principles may take place, I will take the liberty of stating what I understand them to be. The important position I conceive to be laid down, and on which Mr. Malthus's system is chiefly founded, is that, by the immutable law of nature, the procreative power of man is greater than the productive power of food; or, in other words, that there is a constant disposition in the human species to increase beyond the means of subsistence. This is a position therefore, Sir, that I call upon A. O. in the first instance to controvert; for, if it be irrefragable, then it must follow, *ex necessitate*, that unless this tendency to increase be by some means or other prevented or checked, that at some period or other the means of subsistence must be deficient; and that that deficiency will be in proportion to the increased population: and as scarcity increases, and poverty makes its appearance, its attendants, misery and vice, must be proportionally multiplied. Now, Sir, if the acuteness and discernment of your correspondent A. O. should be incapable of exploded these propositions, and which, I presume, you will think in candour he ought to do, before he enlarges the bounty of his censoring epithets, the only subject left for consideration, will be, in what way the evil can be best remedied. Mr. Malthus has ventured to say, that poverty is an evil: will the rich philanthropists at Lloyd's say it is not? But if poverty arises from a scarcity of provisions, it does not seem indicative of extraordinary humanity to wish to increase the number of those who will be craving for food, while, at the same time, the quantity of food is to remain stationary:—those *tender-hearted* creatures, those men of melting charity, will hardly advance that as a philanthropic measure. But then, perhaps, we shall be told, that the cause of this increase of population is implanted on man by an ordinance of the Diety, and that as all things ordained by God have their utility, the passion for affording an increase of the species ought not to be stinted; but,

Mr. Cobbett, will not the same argument apply to every other passion, and will the same reasoners enforce the propriety of indulging to the fullest extent all our other passions? If they do, what becomes of that master-spring of man, his reason; of what utility will that be stated to be, if we are to suffer the instinctive parts of man to rove ad libitum. Our reason informs us that to destroy a human being is an offence of considerable magnitude towards the author of nature: will not however the same chain of reasoning equally inform us, that the bringing into the world a progeny without any means of support, is a murder of greater iniquity than any other, in proportion as it is more deliberate, and as famine is the most acute and dreadful of all species of mortality. In fact, Sir, in what way can an evil be better prevented than by removing the cause? Will that not more become the wisdom of man, than, by suffering the cause to remain unrestrained, to make it necessary for such occasional dreadful visitations of Providence, as famine and pestilence to clear away the superfluous population? But I shall proceed no farther upon this topic for the present.—I have only been anxious in this letter to stem the delusive effects, which an indiscriminate profusion of tender and sympathising expressions are apt to have upon the judgment of man, by calling his passions to its aid; and which must have the necessary effect of producing a prejudice, that once raised, few men will be found disposed to attack; and I most sincerely hope that such of your readers, Sir, who have not perused Mr. Malthus's work attentively, will wait for a dispassionate and impartial investigation of the principles he has laid down, before they join in reprobating him as a hard-hearted misanthropist. However, to shew those who have not perused Mr. Malthus, that he has some traits of benevolence in his character, I will just quote a passage from his work, which will, I am satisfied, prove to any unprejudiced enquirer, that Mr. Malthus possesses the true and genuine spirit of philanthropy and benevolence; virtues which are so frequently bruted, yet so little known by that part of society who are so clamourous in their behalf. "We are not," says Mr. Malthus, "in any case, to lose a present opportunity of doing good, from the mere supposition that we may possibly meet with a worthier object. In all doubtful cases, it may be safely laid down as our duty to follow the natural impulse of our benevolence; but when in fulfilling our obligation as re-

"sonable beings to attend to the *consequences* of our actions, we have, from our own experience and that of others, drawn the conclusion, that the exercise of our benevolence in one mode, is *judicial* in its effects, we are certainly bound, as moral agents, to check our natural propensities in the one direction, and to encourage them and acquire the habits of exercising them in the other." I should think after a due consideration of this passage, it will be difficult to attach to the author of it, the character of hard-hearted; and still less that of misanthropist. I had almost omitted to mention, that education, by which is not to be understood the knowledge of the "Learned Languages," but the cultivation of the human mind, by enabling it to form a just conception of men and things, is thought by Mr. Malthus, and I believe by most thinking men, as the best if not the only effectual mode of improving the morals, and consequently the happiness of society; but such a scheme is reprobated by A. O. for a very curious reason as it appears to me; he says, "is knowledge in itself a principle of such universal and indisputable excellence that it can never be misapplied, that it can never be made the instrument and incentive to mischief, or that it can never be mixed and contaminated with baser matter?" I would ask you, Mr. Cobbett, whether this kind of argument does not recal to your memory the solid reason a father gave for not permitting his child to learn to read or write, namely, that he had thereby effectually prevented him from being punished for a forgery. If the possibility of converting or straining a virtue into vice, be an allowable argument against the encouragement of virtue, then is A. O.'s an argument against the propagation of learning.—But to the present *verbum sat*; I shall postpone my further remarks until after the promised letter of A. O. shall make its appearance.

W. F. S.

Lincoln's Inn.

POOR LAWS.

Being the second Letter of A. O.

SIR,—The English have been called a nation of philosophers; as I conceive on very slender foundations. They are, indeed, a grave people, somewhat slow and dull, and would be wise, if they could. They are of a melancholy turn, and extremely anxious about what does not concern them. They are fond of deep questions, without understanding them; and have that perplexed and plodding kind of intellect, which takes delight in difficulties and contradictions, with-

out ever coming to a concilition. What is incomprehensible and extravagant, they take to be profound: whatever is remote, obscure, and uncertain, they think must be of great weight and importance. They are always in want of some new and mighty project in science, in politics, or in morals, for the morbid sensibility of their minds to brood over, and feed upon; and, by the time they are tired of puzzling themselves to no purpose about one absurdity, another is generally ready to start up and take its place. Thus there is a perpetual, restless succession of philosophers, and systems of philosophy; and the proof they give you of their wisdom to day, is by shewing you what fools they were ten years before. Their pretensions to solidity of understanding rest on the admission of their own shallowness; and their gravest demonstrations rise out of the ruins of others. Mr. Malthus has been for some time past lord of the ascendant, the very polar star of philosophy. But, I will venture to predict, that his reign will not be of much longer duration. His time is come; and this mighty luminary, like many others, that "lately scorched us in the meridian, will sink temperately to the west, and be hardly felt as he descends." It is not difficult to account for the favourable hearing Mr. Malthus's work has received from certain classes of the community. It must be a source of daily complacency and inward exultation to their minds, and a great relief from the troublesome importunity of certain silly prejudices. But I can only account for the attention it has excited among thinking men from a habit of extreme abstraction and over-refined speculation, unsupported by practical reasoning and observation, in consequence of which the mind is dazzled and confounded by any striking fact, which thwarts its previous conclusions. Besides, there is a mixture of meanness and malignity in the human mind, which is glad of the first opportunity to escape from the contemplation of magnificent scenes and visionary improvement, to find once more its own level, and hug itself in that low indifference and apathy which Mr. M.'s work is calculated to encourage. It was a nice *let-down* from the overstrained enthusiasm, and too sanguine hopes which preceded it. Else, how a work of so base a tendency, and so weakly executed, that strikes at the root of every humane principle, and cants about sensibility and morality, in which the little, low, rankling malice of a parish beadle or the overseer of a workhouse is disguised in the garb of philosophy, and proposed as a dress for every English gentleman to wear, where false le-

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gic is buried under a heap of garbled calculations, such as a bad player would make at cribbage, to puzzle those who understood less of the game than himself, where every argument is a *felo de se*, and detects its own imposture, containing "its bane and antidote within itself," how otherwise such a miserable, reptile performance should ever have crawled to that height of reputation which it has reached, I do not understand.—But it seems Mr. Malthus's principle was a *discovery*. There are those, who place him by the side of Sir Isaac Newton, as both equally great, the one in natural, the other in political philosophy. But waving this comparison, I must confess, Sir, that if I were convinced that Mr. Malthus had made any *discovery* at all, there is so little originality in the world, and so much illiberality and ill nature, that I should be disposed to overlook the large share of the latter which Mr. M. has in common with others, which may probably be owing to a bad digestion, ill health, or some former distaste conceived against poverty, and to consider him merely in the light of a man of genius. *Multum ab ludit imago.* Indeed, I do not much see what there is to discover, after reading the genealogy of Noah's descendants, and knowing that the world is round. But, even supposing that there was some deep veil of mystery thrown over the subject, which entirely concealed or involved it in obscurity, Mr. M. was not the first person who penetrated into the secret. Whatever some of his ignorant admirers may pretend, Mr. Malthus will not say that this was the case. He has himself given us a list of authors, some of which he had read before, and some since the publication of his *Essay**, by whom this principle was well understood and distinctly stated long ago. Among these Wallace is the chief: he not only stated the principle itself with the utmost force and clearness, shewing the necessary disproportion between the ratios of the increase of population, and the increase of the produce of the earth, after a certain period, (and till a certain period, I must contend in opposition to Mr. Malthus that the disproportion is not necessary, but casual or voluntary,) but what is most remarkable, he has brought this principle as an answer to the very same schemes of Utopian perfection, and to the same arguments in favour of the progressive

* Among the former are Hume, Wallace, Smith, and Price: among the latter are the French economists, Montesquieu, Franklin, Steuart, Arthur Young, Mr. Townshend, Plato and Aristotle.

improvement, virtue, happiness, and liberty of mankind, which Mr. Malthus first applied it to overturn. For, it is to be recollect, that the use which Mr. M. has since made of this principle to *snub* the poor, to keep down their wages, to shut up the workhouse, to deny them relief, and finally, to preach lectures to them on the dreadful sin of matrimony, was an afterthought. His first, his great, his most memorable effort was directed against the modern philosophy. It was the service which his borrowed weapons did in that cause, which sanctified them to all other purposes. I shall soon have occasion to examine the force of the argument as thus applied; at present I shall only inquire into the originality of the idea. I might here refer your readers to the book itself, or, I might say, that after indulging in all the romantic scenes of visionary happiness which have been so often held out to the expectation of man, he has written a distinct essay for the express purpose of shewing that these scenes could never be realised, or could never be lasting, from the sole principle of Mr. Malthus's *Essay*; or, as he expresses it, from these "primary determinations in nature, a limited earth, a limited degree of fertility, and the continual increase of mankind." But people do not like to take these things upon trust, or general representation; and, it is probable, that few of your readers have the book within their reach. I must, therefore, beg room for a few extracts from his "Prospects of Mankind," &c. and, though they will run to some length, yet, as you, Sir, seem with me to think the sources of Mr. Malthus's reputation a matter of no mean interest, you will not, I hope, think your pages misemployed in dissipating the illusion†. As for Mr. Malthus himself, he ought to be satisfied with this acknowledgment of his importance.—"But without "entering further into these abstracted and "uncertain speculations, it deserves our "particular attention, that as no government which hath hitherto been established is free from all seeds of corruption, or "can be expected to be eternal; so if we "suppose a government to be perfect in its "original frame, and to be administered in "the most perfect manner, after whatever

† See some Essays on this subject in the Monthly Magazine, by an ingenious and well-informed writer, who possessed too much sense and firmness to be carried away by the clamours of upstart ignorance. After the publication of these Essays, some notice was taken of the name of Wallace in the *Essay on Population*.

" model we suppose it to have been framed, " such a perfect form would be so far from " lasting for ever, that it must come to an " end so much the sooner on account of its " perfection. For, though happily such go- " vernment should be firmly established, " though they should be found consistent " with the reigning passions of human na- " ture, though they should spread far and " wide, nay, though they should prevail " universally, they must at last involve " mankind in the deepest perplexity, and " in universal confusion. For how ex- " cellent soever they may be in their own " nature, they are altogether inconsistent " with the present frame of nature, and with " a limited extent of earth.—Under a per- " fect government the inconvenience of " having a family would be so entirely re- " moved, children would be so well taken " care of, and every thing become so fa- " vorable to populousness, that, though " some sickly seasons or dreadful plagues in " particular climates, might cut off multi- " tudes, yet in general, mankind would in- " crease so prodigiously, that the earth " would at last be overstocked, and become " unable to support its numerous inhabi- " tants.—How long the earth with the best " culture of which it is capable from human " genius and industry, might be able to nou- " rish its perpetually increasing inhabitants, " is as impossible as it is unnecessary to be " determined. It is not probable that it " could have supported them during so long " a period as since the creation of Adam. " But, whatever may be supposed of the " length of this period, of necessity it must " be granted that the earth could not nou- " rish them for ever, unless either its ferti- " lity could be continually augmented, or " by some secret in nature, like what cer- " tain enthusiasts have expected from the " Philosopher's Stone, some wise adept in " the occult sciences should invent a me- " thod of supporting mankind quite differ- " ent from any thing known at present. " Nay, though some extraordinary method " of supporting them might possibly be " found out, yet, if there was no bound to " the increase of mankind which would be " the case under a perfect government, " there would not even be sufficient room " for containing their bodies upon the sur- " face of the earth, or upon any limited sur- " face whatsoever. It would be necessary, " therefore, in order to find room for such " multitudes of men, that the earth should " be continually enlarging in bulk as an " animal or vegetable body.—Now, since " philosophers may as soon attempt to make

" mankind immortal, as to support the ani- " mal frame without food, it is equally cer- " tain that limits are set to the fertility of the " earth, and that its bulk so far as is hitherto " known hath continued always the same. " It would be impossible, therefore, to sup- " port the great numbers of men who would " be raised up under a perfect government, " the earth would be overstocked at last, " and the greatest admirers of such fanci- " schemes must foresee the fatal period " when they would come to an end, as they " are altogether inconsistent with the limits " of that earth in which they must exist.— " What a miserable catastrophe of the most " generous of all human systems of govern- " ment! How dreadfully would the magis- " trates of such commonwealths find them- " selves disconcerted at that fatal period " when there was no longer any room for " new colonies, and when the earth could " produce no further supplies! During all " the preceding ages, while there was room " for increase, mankind must have been " happy, the earth must have been a paradise " in the literal sense, as the greatest part of it " must have been turned into delightful and " fruitful gardens. But when the dreadful " time should at last come, when our globe " by the most diligent culture could not " produce what was sufficient to nourish its " numerous inhabitants, what happy ex- " pectant could then be found out to remedy " so great an evil?—In such a cruel ne- " cessity, must there be a law to restrain " marriage? Must multitudes of women be " shut up in cloisters like the ancient vestals " or modern nuns? To keep a balance be- " tween the two sexes must a proportionate " number of men be debarred from mar- " riage? Shall the Utopians, following the " wicked policy of superstition, forbid their " priests to marry; or, shall they rather sa- " crifice men of some other profession for " the good of the state? Or, shall they ap- " point the sons of certain families to be " maimed at their birth, and give a sanction " to the unnatural institution of eunuchs? " If none of these expedients can be thought " proper, shall they appoint a certain num- " ber of infants to be exposed to death as " soon as they are born, determining the " proportion according to the exigencies of " the state, and pointing out the particular " victims by lot, or according to some est- " blished rule? Or, must they shorten the " period of human life by a law, and con- " demn all to die after they had compleated " a certain age, which might be shorter or " longer as provisions were either more " scanty or plentiful? Or, what other sol-

“ that should they devise (for an expedient would be absolutely necessary) to restrain the number of citizens within reasonable bounds?—Alas! how unnatural and inhuman must every such expedient be accounted! The natural passions and appetites of mankind are planted in our frame to answer the best ends for the happiness both of the individuals and of the species. Shall we be obliged to contradict such a wise order? Shall we be laid under the necessity of acting barbarously and inhumanly? Sad and fatal necessity! And which after all could never answer the end, but would give rise to violence and war. For mankind could never agree about such regulations. Force and arms must at last decide their quarrels, and the deaths of such as fall in battle leave sufficient provisions for the survivors, and make room for others to be born.—Thus, the tranquillity and numerous blessings of the Utopian government would come to an end; war, or cruel and unnatural customs be introduced, and a stop put to the increase of mankind, to the advancement of knowledge, and to the culture of the earth, in spite of the most excellent laws and wisest precautions. The more excellent the laws had been, and the more strictly they had been observed, mankind must have sooner become miserable. The remembrance of former times, the greatness of their wisdom and virtue, would conspire to heighten their distress; and the world, instead of remaining the mansion of wisdom and happiness, become the scene of vice and confusion. Force and fraud must prevail, and mankind be reduced to the same calamitous condition as at present.—Such a melancholy situation in consequence merely of the want of provisions, is in truth more unnatural than all their present calamities. Supposing men to have abused their liberty, by which abuse vice has once been introduced into the world, and that wrong notions, a bad taste, and vicious habits, have been strengthened by the defects of education and government, our present distresses may be easily explained. They may even be called natural, being the natural consequences of our depravity. They may be supposed to be the means by which Providence punishes vice, and by setting bounds to the increase of mankind prevents the earth's being overstocked, and men being laid under the cruel neces-

“ sity of killing one another. But to suppose that in the course of a favourable Providence, a perfect government had been established, under which the disorders of human passions had been powerfully corrected and restrained; poverty, idleness, and war banished; the earth made a paradise; universal friendship and concord established, and human society rendered flourishing in all respects; and that such a lovely constitution should be overturned, not by the vices of men or their abuse of liberty, but by the order of nature itself, seems wholly unnatural, and altogether disagreeable to the methods of Providence.—By reasoning in this manner, it is not pretended, that it is unnatural to set bounds to human knowledge and happiness, or to the grandeur of society, and to confine what is finite to proper limits. It is certainly fit to set just bounds to every thing according to its nature, and to adjust all things in due proportion to one another. Undoubtedly, such an excellent order is actually established throughout all the works of God in his wide dominions. But, there are certain primary determinations in nature, to which all other things of a subordinate kind must be adjusted. A limited earth, a limited degree of fertility, and the continual increase of mankind, are three of these original constitutions. To these determinations, human affairs and the circumstances of all other animals must be adapted. In which view it is unsuitable to our ideas of order, that while the earth is only capable of maintaining a determined number, the human race should increase without end. This would be the necessary consequence of a perfect government and education, on which account it is more contrary to just proportion to suppose that such a perfect government should be established in such circumstances, than that by permitting vice or the abuse of liberty in the wisdom of Providence mankind should never be able to multiply so greatly as to overstock the earth.—From this view of the circumstances of the world, notwithstanding the high opinion we have of the merit of Sir Thomas More and other admired projectors of perfect governments in ancient or modern times, we may discern how little can be expected from their most perfect systems.—As for these worthy philosophers, patriots, and law-

"givers, who have employed their time and their talents in framing such excellent models, we ought to do justice to their characters, and gratefully to acknowledge their generous efforts to rescue the world out of that distress, into which it has fallen through the imperfection of government. Sincere and ardent in their love of virtue, enamoured of its lovely form, deeply interested for the happiness of mankind, to the best of their skill and with hearts full of zeal, they have strenuously endeavoured to advance human society to perfection. For this their memory ought to be sacred to posterity. But if they expected their beautiful systems actually to take place, their hopes were ill founded, and they were not sufficiently aware of the consequences.—The speculations of such ingenious authors enlarge our views and amuse our fancies. They are useful for directing us to correct certain errors at particular times. Able legislators ought to consider them as models, and honest patriots ought never to lose sight of them, or any proper opportunity of transplanting the wisest of their maxims into their own governments, as far as they are adapted to their particular circumstances, and will give no occasion to dangerous convulsions. But this is all that can be expected. Though such ingenious romances should chance to be read and admired, jealous and selfish politicians need not be alarmed. Such statesmen need not fear that ever such airy systems shall be able to destroy their craft, or disappoint them of their intention to sacrifice the interest of mankind to their own avarice or ambition. There is too powerful a charm which works secretly in favour of such politicians, which will for ever defeat all attempts to establish a perfect government. There is no need of miracles for this purpose. The vices of mankind are sufficient; and we need not doubt but Providence will make use of them, for preventing the establishment of governments which are by no means suitable to the present circumstances of the earth*."—Various Prospects of Mankind, Nature, and Providence, chap. 4, 113. —Here then, Sir, is the very same argument brought to bear in the most direct and

* A different spirit breathes through this chapter from that of the Essay; the spirit of a gentleman, a philosopher, and a philanthropist. Mr. Malthus, indeed sometimes limps after his model, and *cants* liberality in the true whine of hypocrisy.

pointed manner on the very same subject; the same principle stated, and the same consequences deduced from it. It often happens that one man states a particular principle, and that another draws an important inference from it, which the first was not at all aware of. But it cannot be pretended that this is the case by the present instance. The fact and the inference are both given as fully, as precisely, and explicitly in Wallace as they can be given in any one, as far as general reasoning will go. "So does this anticipation prevent Mr. Malthus's discovery," for, it happens that Wallace's book was published in 1791. As to the details contained in the Essay, I leave them to the connoisseurs. As to the ground-work, it appears to have been completely pre-occupied. Mr. M. has just about the same pretensions to originality in the business, as any one would have who repeated Mr. M.'s arguments after him, and did it in words a little different from his own. "Oh! but," I hear some one cry out, "the geometrical and arithmetical ratios! Has Wallace said any thing about them? Did he find *them* out?" Why really I do not know: whether after having brought his principle to light, he christened it himself, I cannot determine. It seems to me sufficient for him to have said, that let the one ratio increase as fast as it would, the other would increase much faster, as this is all that is practically meant by a geometrical and arithmetical ratio †. But, I should have no objection to let Mr. M. have the honour of standing godfather to another's bantling (and Mr. Shandy was of opinion that it was a matter of as great importance to hit upon a lucky name for a child as to beget it) but that the technical phrase he has employed as a convenient short-hand method of explaining the subject in reality applies only to one half of it. The gradual increase applies only to the degree of cultivation of the earth, not to the quantity. These two things are palpably distinct. It does not begin to take place till the whole surface of the earth has been cultivated to a certain degree, or only with respect to those parts of it which have been

† As far as I understand the nature of an arithmetical and geometrical series, I do not apprehend that Mr. M. could make good their strict application to the subject. An arithmetical series is where any number or quantity is increased by the perpetual addition of the same given sum or quantity. But how does Mr. M. know that this is true of the cultivation of the land, or that much more rapid strides may not be made at one time than at another.

cultivated. It is evident that while most of the soil remained wholly unoccupied and uncultivated, (which must have been the case for many ages after these two principles began to operate, and is still the case in many countries) the power of increase in the productions of the earth, and consequently, in the support of population would be exactly in proportion to the population itself, for there would be nothing more necessary in order to the earth's maintaining its inhabitants, than that there should be inhabitants enough to till the earth. In this case, the cultivation of the earth would be limited by the population, not the population by the state of the cultivation. Where there was no want of room, and a power of transporting themselves from place to place, which there would naturally be in great continents, and in gradually increasing colonies, there could be no want of subsistence. All that would be wanted would be power to raise or gather the fruits which the earth had in store, which as long as men were born with hands they would be always able to do. If a certain extent of ground easily maintained a certain number of inhabitants, they would only have to spread themselves over double the surface to maintain double the number. The difficulty is not in making more land maintain more men, but in making the same spot of ground maintain a greater number than it did before. Thus Noah might have taken possession of the three contiguous quarters of the globe for himself and his three sons; and, if they instead of having three sons had had each of them three hundred, there would, I believe, have been no danger of their starving, but the contrary, from the rapid increase of population. What I mean to shew is, that it is not true as a general principle that the increase of population and the increase in the means of subsistence are necessarily disproportionate to each other, that the one is in a geometrical, the other is in an arithmetical ratio; but, that in a particular and very important view of the subject, the extent of population is only limited by the extent of the earth, and that the increase of the means of subsistence will be in proportion to the greater extent of surface occupied, which may be enlarged as fast as there are numbers to occupy it. I have been thus particular, because mathematical terms carry with them an imposing air of accuracy and profundity, and ought, therefore, to be applied strictly, and with the greatest caution, or not at all. I should say, therefore, that looking at the subject in a general and philosophical point of view, I do not think that the expression of an arith-

metical and geometrical series applies so far, with respect to the extent of ground occupied, which is one thing on which population depends, and in the first instance always, this might evidently be increased in any ratio whatever, that the increase of population would admit, until the earth was entirely occupied; and after that there would be no room either for a geometrical or arithmetical progression; it would be at an absolute stand. The distinction is therefore confined to the degree of art and diligence used in the cultivation of those parts which have been already occupied. This has no doubt gone on at a very slow kind of snail's pace from the very first, and will I dare say continue to do so; or to adopt Wallace's distinction, the increase of population is either not restricted at all by the "limited nature of the earth," or it is limited absolutely by it: it is only kept back indefinitely by the "limited fertility" of the earth; and it cannot be said to be kept back necessarily by this, while there are vast tracts of habitable land left untouched. Till there is no more room, and no more food to be procured without extreme exertion and contrivance, the arithmetical and geometrical ratios do not naturally begin to operate; and the gradual increase that might take place after that period, is not in my opinion (who am no great speculator) of sufficient importance to deserve a pompous appellation. I would, therefore, rather stop there, because it will simplify the question. Till the world is full, or at least till every country is full, that is, maintains as many inhabitants as the soil will admit, namely, till it can be proved satisfactorily that it might not by taking proper methods be made to maintain double the number that it does, the increase of mankind is not necessarily checked by the "limited extent of the earth," nor by its "limited fertility," but by other causes. Till then population must be said to be kept down, not by the physical constitution of nature, but by the will of man. Till then, Mr. Malthus has no right to set up his arithmetical and geometrical ratios upon the face of the earth, and say they are the work of nature. You, Sir, will not be at a loss to perceive the fallacy which lurks under the gloss which Mr. M. has here added to Wallace's text. His readers looking at his mathematical scale will be apt to suppose, that population is a naturally growing and necessary evil; that it is always encroaching on and straitening the means of existence, and doing more harm than good: that its pernicious effects are at all times and in all places equally necessary and unavoidable; that it is at

all times an evil, but that the evil increases in proportion to the increase of population; and that, therefore, there is nothing so necessary as to keep population down at all events. This is the imperious dictate of nature, the grinding law of necessity, the end and the fulfilling of the commandment. I do not mean to say, that Mr. M. does not often shift his ground on this subject, or that he is not himself aware of the deception. It is sufficient for him that he has it to resort to, whenever he is in want of it; that he has been able to throw dust in his readers' eyes, and dazzle them by a specious shew of accuracy; that he has made out a bill of indictment against the principle of population as a general nuisance in society, and has obtained a general warrant against it, and may have it brought into court as a felon whenever he thinks proper. He has alarmed men's minds with confused apprehensions on the subject, by setting before their eyes, in an orderly series, the malignant nature and terrible effects of population, which are perpetually increasing as it goes on: and they are ready to assent to every scheme that promises to keep these dreadful evils at a distance from them. "*Sacro tremuere timore.* Every coward is planet-struck." But nothing of all this is the truth. Population is only an evil, as Mr. M. has himself shewn, in proportion as it is excessive: it is not a necessary evil, till the supply of food can, from natural causes, no longer keep pace with it: till this is the case, no restraints are necessary, and when this is the case, the same wholesome degree of restraint, the same quantity of vice and misery, will operate equally to prevent any tremendous consequences, whether the actual population is great or small; that is, whether it is stopped only from having reached the utmost limits prescribed by nature, or whether it has been starved and crushed down long before that period by positive, arbitrary institutions, and the perverse nature of man. But this is entering upon a matter which I intended to reserve for another letter, in which I shall examine the force of the arguments which Mr. M. has built upon this principle. At present, I have done all that was necessary to the performance of the first part of my engagement, which was to shew that Mr. Malthus had little claim to the praise of originality.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,—A. Q.—Tuesday.

CATHOLIC BILL.

SIR,—In a country torn by party dissensions as ours is at present, it is most fortunate that there is one weekly publication,

in which a man who is unconnected equally with the late and the present ministers can deliver his opinions.—In your letters to the Electors of Westminster, you have proved the undoubted right of his Majesty to change his ministers, and to dissolve a parliament as often as he pleases.—I am one of those who think that the measure proposed by Lord Howick in the House of Commons was both wise and just; and, I believe it would have passed through both Houses without a division, if the King had previously consented to it. The statements of Lords Grenville and Howick are before the public, and I protest to you that it does appear to me incomprehensible, how those ministers could have construed his Majesty's consent to an extension of the Irish Bill of 1793, to the whole British empire, into a consent to abolish the Test Laws in England. Their dismission was the consequence of this blunder, and the present ministers advised a dissolution. With submission to you, Mr. Cobbett, I cannot allow the comparison of the cry of chartered rights in 1784, with that of religion in the present day, to be quite fair. In 1784 no public danger could result from the use made by Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville of the cry of chartered rights. The fact was clear, that Mr. Fox's India Bill annihilated the chartered rights of the East India Company, and a great majority of the nation believed as I did, and do still believe, that the Company had great public merit to boast of at that period, and had they been left to conduct their own affairs, would have been soon relieved from the temporary embarrassments under which they laboured. You will consider also that the year 1784, was a period of peace, and with every probability that the peace would long continue.—What is our situation in 1807? A debt of more than six hundred millions; a war to which there is no probable termination, either from success or from defeat; and with a certainty that when peace is restored on the continent, an invasion of England or of Ireland will be attempted. If ever, therefore, there was a time when the heart and hand of every man in the empire should be united for the public service, this is the time beyond any preceding period. But for the miserable purpose of gaining a few seats in parliament, the senseless cry of the church's danger is echoed from one corner of the kingdom to the other.—And what possible danger to the church could have followed in England, had Lord Howick's bill passed into a law? The Catholics here, are too inconsiderable in number, ever to be dangerous. The dissenters though more numerous, are

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not the twentieth part of our population. If the church is at all in danger, it is as the Bishop of Norwich very sensibly observed in his late charge to his clergy, from the rapid increase of methodism, which if it goes on, must, as he says, soon render *a church establishment useless*.—But in Ireland the case is far different. There, without arguing whether the proportion of Catholics to Protestants is as four or as three to one, it is sufficient for rational argument, to take what is universally admitted to be true, that the excess of population is on the Catholic side, while the weight of landed property is with the Protestants. But, here again, we must consider what the Protestants are. Not members of the established church. The great majority are presbyterians, descendants of the first Scotch settlers in Ireland, and of Cromwell's officers and soldiers. I think, therefore, I am accurate, when I say, that not more than one tenth part of the whole population in Ireland are members of the established church. Admitting these facts to be true, does it not appear a monstrous absurdity, that *at this day* nine-tenths of the population of a kingdom should be precluded by law from serving his Majesty in any offices civil and military, to which he may be pleased to appoint them, for without his permission they cannot serve him at all.— But, if it be true that a Catholic cannot be a loyal subject to a Protestant king, which every man of common sense must deny, how comes it, that in the present reign almost every restriction under which the Catholics laboured, has been done away? It is a case where there can, in my humble opinion, be no medium. Either the Catholics were unfit to be trusted, and no restrictive law ought to have been repealed, which is an argument I have heard from some old Irish members, as they are fit to be trusted, and should be eligible to all offices. Such was the opinion of Mr. Pitt, Mr. Fox, and Lord Cornwallis while they were living, and such is the opinion of Lords Grenville and Howick, and of some of the members of the present cabinet.— This is a question however, on which his Majesty has an *undoubted* right to have *an opinion*; and if he is not inclined to remove the very few restrictions that are unrepealed, the business must remain in its present state. This it may do, but the abuse bestowed on the Catholics may be spared. It is as impolitic as it is unjust.—I am one of those who think with you, that nothing can be more absurd, than an attachment to a Pope, an old man living beyond the Alps, and a creature of Buonaparté's. But, what mischief can such an attachment do *in these days*? What

mischief did it ever do, since the period of the reformation. In the reign of Elizabeth, Philip the Second compelled the Pope much against his inclination to promulgate a bull of excommunication against her, and enjoining her subjects to withdraw their allegiance from her. What was the consequence of this act of imbecile folly? It united the whole body of the Catholics in her favour, and when Philip sent forth his Armada, both her fleets and her armies were served by Catholic officers, soldiers, and sailors, who flocked to her standard, were graciously received, and their services publicly acknowledged. Can any man believe that Buonaparté would not long ago have ordered the Pope to issue a bull against his Majesty, if he did not know that so mad a measure would destroy any hopes he may entertain of future success in Ireland.—You very truly say, that the Test Laws are already virtually repealed, by the bill which passes annually, freeing those from penalties, who infringe them; and, therefore, as applied to the army and navy, Lord Howick's bill was useless. Indeed, the agitation of any question in favour of the Catholics short of complete emancipation could do no service.—But, Mr. Cobbett, though I see a complete change in Catholics, though I am convinced that if left to enjoy their own religion in peace, they have no longer a wish to make converts, and the solitary instances alluded to by your correspondent *Anti-Catholicus*, is of no consequence, yet the rage for making converts is taken up with more zeal by another sect of religionists, than it ever was by Roman Catholics. I mean by the followers of Whitfield and Wesley, who claim to themselves the merit of being the orthodox members of the church of England, and who declare that they are governed by her articles and homilies. These are the men from whom the church and the state have great danger to apprehend: what is the influence which the priests in Ireland have over the common people, compared to the influence of the field preachers of the Whitfield and Wesley schools. How many of this description, under the name of *Gospel Ministers*, to distinguish them from other clergymen, have got considerable church preferment. Nor are their efforts confined to this country. They have bible societies, and their missionaries are spread over the face of the globe. Our empire in India was convulsed to its centre last July, and we do not yet know that the danger is over. I allude to the alarming mutiny at Vellore, which, though it broke out owing to a very impolitic order, for converting a turban into something like a hat,

and to a regulation passed, though not enforced, for taking away from the forehead of a Hindoo, the mark of his religion; yet it originated in a prevalent opinion that we wished to convert the Mahomenans and Hindoos to Christianity. Nor was this opinion rightly taken up. Parts of the Bible are translated, if not the whole of it, into the Hindoo language. There are many missionaries on the Coast of Coromandel, and a clergyman in Bengal has published a book, in which he not only recommends most strenuously our attempting to convert the Hindoos to the Christian religion, but supposes the thing *to be practicable*. From similar folly, the Portuguese lost what they once possessed in India, and such will be our fate, if we are mad enough to follow their example.—Without any exaggeration, we may be fairly said to govern nations in India, containing fifty millions of people. The Europeans of every description, civil servants, officers, soldiers, &c. &c. do not exceed twenty-five thousand men, and until the present period it has been our boast, that we have paid the most sacred regard to the religious opinions, both of Hindoos and Mahometans. We mix them in our battalions of Sepoys, and each sect was left at full liberty to serve God in its own way. Yet, Mr. Cobbett, with the mania for conversion which now prevails in England, and which Englishmen have encouraged in distant countries, we are afraid lest a silly old woman, or a love-sick girl, should once in a year become a Catholic from a Protestant.—I trust, however, that the good sense of the country will soon return; and that every man of every religion, will step forth in its defence, for never was there a period in which the service of every friend to his country was so much required as at the present day.—**A PROTESTANT, BUT NO BIGOT.**

May 10, 1807.

MR. LE MAITRE.

SIR,—I had just taken up your Register this morning, and proceeded as far as the mention of my name, when I was interrupted by friends, who not knowing that I subscribed to your valuable paper were anxious to make known to me the notice you had pleased to take of a proceeding that had occurred in the committee room of Mr. Paull during the late contest for Westminster. I went on with your statement, and saw at once what the thing was. Being engaged very laudably in forming a contrast between the line of conduct pursued by Mr. Paull and by Mr. Sheridan, your “ardent mind” induced you inconsiderately to make mention

of a circumstance which you will excuse my saying it would have been better you had never publicly noticed, and that it should have been suffered, as it deserved, to have sunk into oblivion, and as Mr. Paull in your hearing earnestly intreated I would allow. I pass over a circumstance I am willing to believe accidental, of your placing my name so near to Mr. Hart’s, as almost to allow it to be supposed you wished to hazard some insinuation disrespectful to my moral character, and proceed to remind you, that in your anxiety to defend Mr. Paull you have left off in the middle of the transaction, and allowed a belief to obtain that I was finally dismissed the committee. This opinion as injurious I conceive to Mr. Paull, and as degrading to me as it is remote from the truth, I am obliged, Sir, to call upon you as publicly to contradict. And as you have stated so much to promote the cause of Mr. Paull, I am sure you will allow me to compleat the statement.—On the third day of the Westminster election, seeing that Mr. Paull had headed Mr. Sheridan so considerably, I conceived that if a powerful effort were made, it would probably leave Mr. Sheridan so far behind as to induce him to abandon the contest, and consequently relieve Mr. Paull from a grievous expense, I suggested this to many of my friends, and went to Mr. Paull’s committee and offered my services. Upon requesting instructions I now learned that the spontaneous exertions of the electors had placed Mr. Paull in his triumphant situation, and that the committee had neither plan nor system to regulate the business of the canvass. I took the liberty of suggesting to them my apprehensions, that unless some plan was immediately adopted the tortoise might overtake the hare: my fears met with little attention and I left them. On the fifth day, I believe, Mr. Sheridan coalesced with Sir S. Hood, and I saw the contest was likely to assume another complexion. I hastened to the committee, my plans were adopted, and I was requested to superintend the execution of them. It was very late to begin, but trifles do not alarm me; and from eight in the morning till near midnight I laboured for several days until I had accomplished, though too late to be useful, a plan of conduct which had it been prepared in time, would have secured to the friends of liberty, honour, and integrity, a triumph equal to their best wishes, in spite of coalition, and every other infamy by which our opponents have seemed anxious to disgrace their cause. It was while I was working upon this plan, you, Sir, introduced yourself, and making the most handsome

apology, you delivered with much reluctance Mr. Paull's message, that it was his wish I should retire from the committee. I was indeed surprised. I had been honoured with the particular hatred of Mr. Pitt: during seven years I had experienced every species of persecution his political views and his haughty soul impatient of opposition could impose upon me; and the greater part of this time I had been shut up in various dungeons, without even a knowledge of the probable charges against me. But my conduct I had flattered myself during this period of trial, had been such as would secure me the sympathy and esteem of all not concerned in the oppression. In 1796 Mr. Tooke stood for Westminster, and I hope he will excuse my saying that he saw with satisfaction my youthful endeavours to assist his cause. During the two celebrated struggles for Middlesex, I cannot reproach myself with having relaxed in my exertions a single hour. It was known that I neither expected nor received emolument or reward of any kind, and therefore, my independent zeal, I hope deserved, and I believe met with general attention. I told you therefore, in reply, that Mr. Paull was the first man who had given me insult; but, I added, that as I had never been honoured with Mr. Paull's acquaintance, I had not entered that room on his account. My sole consideration had been the public cause; and then noticing as above related my motives for joining the committee, I stated that my principal regret now consisted in the abandonment of a plan which the members of the committee would scarcely, I feared, be able without my superintendance to carry into execution. You noticed that you were not aware of my being engaged upon any thing particular; and upon further explanation you exclaimed: "upon my honour, Mr. Lemaire, this is the only really useful thing I have yet seen in this committee," and you begged that I would not allow my offended feelings to induce me to leave the room, until you had seen Mr. Paull and brought his further instructions. I consented to stay, and in half an hour you returned with Mr. Paull; we retired into the closet, when Mr. Paull pressing my hand between both of his said, Mr. Lemaire, Mr. Cobbett has just explained to me how very kindly you have undertaken to arrange a plan of the highest utility and consequence to us in the present state of the election. You have unfortunately been insulted and ill treated, but for God's sake do forget it, and give us the assistance you intended; with many other expressions of kindness and obligation which you will re-

collect, Sir, and I need not repeat; and, Sir, it is not more than three weeks since, a friend of mine at Mr. Paull's particular desire, repeated his sincere regret at what had unhappily taken place in my respect. I mention it to Mr. Paull's honour. This gentleman had been hastily induced to join his voice to the cry which had formerly with such baneful consequences been raised against me, but like a man of honour he corrected the error, and he did more, like a liberal man he acknowledged it.—I must now, Sir, beg you will excuse that I so late offer you my thanks for the remonstrances you say you made to Mr. Paull in my favour. But, Sir, as I see clearly from some remarks you have made, that you have a very imperfect acquaintance with the situation in which it was convenient for the then ministers to place me, I enclose a copy of one of the several petitions to the House of Commons which in 1800, 1801, and 1802, Mr. Grey (now Lord Howick) did me the honour to present and support, and which after some debate was ordered, and does now lay upon their table. And, Sir, you will allow me to add, that bearing in mind every particular of my situation, the language held by many of the present ministers, then in opposition, upon my particular case, the favourable expressions made in my favour by our late illustrious statesman, Mr. Fox, and which I have by me; and, observing further, the powerful exertions making by the present government to do justice to the unhappy slave in the West Indies, I cannot forbear looking forward to the period when my case will come again under the cognizance of the government and the public; and that that justice which in spite of the exertions of many of those persons now holding the reins of government, I had not then the good fortune to obtain, may under the auspices of our present ministers be granted to me.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,—P. T. LEMAIRE.—London, March 15, 1807.

"To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland the humble Petition of P. T. Lemaire,

" SHEWETH, — That your petitioner was arrested in Sept. 1794, in the house of Macaire, and Co. watch case makers, where he was articled, under a warrant from his Grace the Duke of Portland, charging him with high treason; his books and papers were seized to the amount of several pounds, and are still detained, although the Privy Council, during several very long examinations, never produced any thing said to have been found in his possession to which they

endeavoured to attach blame. Your petitioner hoped that he had satisfactorily repelled before them the charges preferred against him of a design to assassinate his Sovereign, and beside his own testimony some respectable friends without his knowledge voluntarily presented themselves, and were examined, to prove the strong improbability of his being engaged in such a plot. Yet he was committed to the House of Correction, in Cold Bath Fields, and treated there with the utmost brutality. On the arrest of your petitioner, his mother was told by one of the officers that they had seized enough in his possession to hang him, and that she must expect to see him no more until she saw him go to the gallows. She was put to bed and rose no more. She died in about two months. On this occasion, Aris, the keeper of the Cold Bath Fields prison, had the inhumanity to order two persons whom his deputy had directed to attend your petitioner in strong convulsions to quit his chamber, and leave him to his fate, which they did, supposing, as they informed him on his recovery, he could never survive this treatment.—Thus torn from his business, ease, and comfort, your petitioner passed the severe winter of 1794 and 1795, in a cold damp cell, and still he occasionally suffers by a complaint contracted in this place. His friends were refused admittance, his father and cousin (Macaire) alone excepted, even a taylor was not allowed to measure him for mourning; all parcels coming to or going from him were closely searched in the prison, and in this examination they found their account, as they could select the articles they chose for their own wear; and when your petitioner complained to the keeper, Aris, that he had been plundered of a month's linen, &c. he said he could do nothing in it, unless your petitioner chose to have the lodgings of all the turnkeys searched; an indiscriminate and fruitless measure, your petitioner did not consent to adopt. Robbed of health, peace, and property, your petitioner left this place on £300. bail in May, 1795, and immediately on his liberation went to the house of the Right Hon. Wm. Pitt, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, to demand the necessary documents in order to institute a prosecution against the parties, by whose machinations he had so severely suffered. After some time he was referred to the Privy Council, but his application to their lordships was unsuccessful. The following year, 1796, your petitioner was surprised with the intelligence that a bill of indictment for high treason had been found against him at the Old Bailey. He

immediately surrendered to the court, and was committed to Newgate. Some weeks after this he was arraigned at the bar, when, strange as it may appear for the first time in his life, your petitioner met here a man, Crosfield, and held up his hand with him, whom to the best of his knowledge he had never seen or heard of before, but with whom he was charged with conspiring the king's death. Some months after this, your petitioner was again put to the bar and acquitted; Mr. Attorney General declaring he had no evidence to produce against him. But, your Hon. House will observe, that this summary discharge did not acquit your petitioner of any of the expences of a defence, the great amount of which to a private individual without fortune, is exceedingly oppressive, nor was this the whole extent of the pecuniary loss incurred by your petitioner. His agreements with Messrs. Macaire, and Co. exacted of him for every day's absence from business 9 shillings, on which account he paid upwards of an hundred guineas.—In April, 1798, your petitioner was again seized, and again committed to Newgate, on charges of "treasonable practices," where after he had been confined about a year he was attacked violently with spasms in the stomach, and, once more in a prison, his life was despaired of. Your petitioner earnestly solicited of His Grace the Duke of Portland, that he might be brought to trial, but received no answer. From this prison on the 10th August, 1799, your petitioner was removed to Reading Jail, where his spasmodic complaint again returned, on which occasion he met with the reverse of the humane treatment he had before experienced in Newgate. Your petitioner remained here until the 2d of March, 1801, when he was ordered to town, and taken before Mr. Justice Ford, in Bow Street, who offered to liberate him on condition of giving his own recognizance to appear on the first day of the ensuing term in the Court of King's Bench. But, as the Privy Council had refused to tell him on his examination in 1798, on what specific charge he had been arrested, your petitioner refused to enter into the recognizance demanded of him, until he could learn the real grounds of accusation on which he had been three years detained in various prisons. On his refusal to accede to the terms proposed, your petitioner was taken from this office to the Parliament Street Hotel, whence he wrote to the Duke of Portland, desiring to be liberated without any condition or recognizance. Your petitioner received no answer, but was committed the same afternoon to Tothill Fields pri-

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son, in which new hardships awaited him, for either he must submit to be lodged in an apartment destitute of every accommodation, wherein to exclude the inclemencies of the season he must shut out the light, the window not being glazed, he must associate with felons at the rate of 35 shillings per week, or pay two guineas and a half per week for his board and lodging. The state of your petitioners health demanded that he should reject the first, his character and feelings would not allow him to submit to the second, and thus he was reduced to the necessity to preserve his health, and avoid the worst society, to incur an expence in this protracted season of suffering beyond his power to discharge, without a painful dependence on friends, whose resources he had already exhausted. In this situation your petitioner again appealed to the Duke of Portland, but his Grace directed that he should be allowed only 20 shillings per week, leaving £1. 12. 6. to be paid by himself. By stat. 7 of William 3 cap. — it is enacted that no person shall be prosecuted for treason, unless it be against the king's person three years after the fact is committed. The Habeas Corpus Act was now in force. Your petitioner therefore, having since his last arrest been confined three years, thought the law would liberate him. Lord Kenyon was applied to for an Habeas, but he refused to grant one, and referred your petitioner to the Court of King's Bench in the ensuing term. But before the first day of term when your petitioner was to have been brought up to the Court, the Habeas Corpus Act was again suspended. Under these circumstances your petitioner submitted to the terms of liberation again offered to him through the personal medium of Mr. Ford, and was liberated on the 25th of April last. On the 11th inst. your petitioner addressed to his Grace the Duke of Portland, a memorial giving a detail of the above particulars, and requesting to be reimbursed his immediate expences. To this application no answer has been made.—By every consideration your petitioner is now invited to appeal to your Hon. House. Did your petitioner feel in the smallest degree culpable, he would court obscurity, and silently submit to the ruin that unavoidably follows such an age of suffering, having been confined a great part of the period between eighteen and twenty-five years of age. But your petitioner assures your Hon. House, that he has innocently incurred the injuries he has endured, and such your petitioner humbly submits is the presumption arising from the protract-

tion of imprisonment, beyond the period limited by the statute already alluded to for the trial of persons accused of treason (except on the king's person, with which your petitioner was not charged) inasmuch as were your petitioner guilty *even in the judgment of his Majesty's then ministers*, it would leave them without excuse, and guilty themselves of a high misdemeanor of neglect, and breach of public duty to his Majesty and their country, for suffering a traitor to escape for ever without bringing him to trial. Your petitioner, therefore, humbly prays your Hon. House to take his case into your consideration, and for such relief or the adoption of such measures as your Hon. House in your wisdom these circumstances may seem to require.—And your petitioner shall ever pray.—P. T. LEMAITRE.—
June 1, 1801.

FOREIGN OFFICIAL PAPERS.

AMERICA.—*Message of the President of the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, December 2, 1806.*

It would have given me, fellow-citizens, great satisfaction to announce, in the moment of your meeting, that the difficulties in our foreign relations, existing at the time of our last separation, had been amicably and justly terminated. I lost no time in taking those measures which were most likely to bring them to such a termination, by special missions, charged with such powers and instructions, as, in the event of failure, could leave no imputation on either our moderation or forbearance. The delays, which have since taken place in our negotiations with the British government, appear to have proceeded from causes which do not forbid the expectation that, during the course of the session, I may be enabled to lay before you their final issue.—What will be that of the negotiations for settling our differences with Spain, nothing which had taken place, at the date of the last dispatches, enables us to pronounce. On the western side of the Mississippi, she advanced in considerable force, and took post at the settlement of Bayon Pierre, on the Red River.—This village was originally settled by France, was held by her as long as she held Louisiana, and was delivered to Spain only as a part of Louisiana. Being small, insulated, and distant, it was not observed, at the moment of re-delivery to France and the United States, that she continued a guard of half a dozen men, which had been stationed there. A proposition, however, having been lately made by our commander

in chief, to assume the Sabine River as a temporary line of separation between the troops of the two nations, until the issue of our negotiations shall be known, this has been referred by the Spanish commandant to his superior, and in the mean time he has withdrawn his force to the western side of the Sabine River. The correspondence on this subject, now communicated, will exhibit, more particularly, the present state of things in that quarter.—The nature of that country requires indispensably that an unusual proportion of the force employed there should be cavalry, or mounted infantry. In order, therefore, that the commanding officer might be enabled to act with effect, I had authorised him to call on the Governors of Orleans and Mississippi, for a corps of five hundred volunteer cavalry. The temporary arrangements he has proposed, may perhaps render this unnecessary. But I inform you, with great pleasure, of the promptitude with which the inhabitants of those territories have tendered their services in defence of their country. It has done honour to themselves, entitled them to the confidence of their fellow-citizens in every part of the union, and must strengthen the general determination to protect them efficaciously, under all circumstances which may occur.—Having received information, that in another part of the United States, a great number of private individuals were combining together, arming and organising themselves, contrary to law, to carry on a military expedition against the territories of Spain, I thought it necessary, by proclamation, as well as by special orders, to take measures for preventing and suppressing this enterprise, for seizing the vessels, arms, and other means provided for it, and for arresting and bringing to justice, its authors and abettors. It was due to that good faith which ought ever to be the rule of action in public, as well as in private transactions; it was due to good order, and regular government, that while the public force was acting strictly on the defensive, and merely to protect our citizens from aggression, the criminal attempts of private individuals, to decide for their country the question of peace or war, by commencing active and unauthorised hostilities, should be promptly and efficaciously suppressed—whether it will be necessary to enlarge our regular force, will depend on the result of our negotiations with Spain. But as it is uncertain when that result will be known, the provisional measures requisite for that, and to meet any pressure intervening to that quarter, will

be a subject for your early consideration.—The possession of both banks of the Mississippi reducing to a single point the defence of that river, its waters, and the country adjacent, it becomes highly necessary to provide for that point a more adequate security. Some position above its mouth, commanding in the passage of the river should be rendered sufficiently strong to cover the armed vessels which may be stationed there for defence; and, in conjunction with them, to present an insuperable obstacle to any force attempting to pass. The approaches to the city of New Orleans, from the eastern quarter also, will require to be examined, and more effectually guarded. For the internal support of the country, the encouragement of a strong settlement on the western side of the Mississippi, within reach of New Orleans, will be worthy the consideration of the Legislature. The gun-boats, authorised by an act of the last session, are so advanced, that they will be ready for service in the ensuing Spring. Circumstances permitted us to allow the time necessary for their more solid construction. As a much larger number will still be wanting to place our sea-port towns and waters in that state of defence to which we are competent, and they entitled, a similar appropriation for a further provision of them is recommended for the ensuing year. A further appropriation will also be necessary for repairing fortifications already established, and the erection of such other works as may have real effect in obstructing the approach of an enemy to our sea-port towns, or their remaining before them. In a country whose constitution is derived from the will of the people, directly expressed by their free suffrages; where the principal executive functionaries, and those of the legislature, are renewed by them at short periods; where, under the character of jurors, they exercise in person the greatest portion of the judiciary powers, where the laws are consequently so formed and administered as to bear with equal weight and favour on all, restraining no man in the pursuits of honest industry, and securing to every one the property which that acquires, it would not be supposed that any safeguards could be needed against insurrection or enterprise, on the public peace or authority. The laws, however, aware that these should not be trusted to moral restraints only, have wisely provided punishment for these crimes, when committed. But would it not be salutary to give also the means of preventing their commission? Where an enterprise is

meditated by private individuals against a foreign nation, in amity with the United States, powers of prevention, to a certain extent, are given by the laws. Would they not be as reasonable and useful, where the enterprise preparing is against the United States? While adverting to this branch of law, it is proper to observe, that in enterprises meditated against foreign nations, the ordinary process of binding to the observance of the peace and good behaviour, could it be extended to acts to be done out of the jurisdiction of the United States, would be effectual in some cases where the offender is able to keep out of sight every indication of his purpose which could draw on him the exercise of the powers now given by law.—The States on the coast of Barbary seem generally disposed at present to respect peace and friendship. With Tunis alone, some uncertainty remains. Persuaded that it is our interest to maintain our peace with them on equal terms, or not at all, I propose to send, in due time, a reinforcement into the Mediterranean, unless previous information shall shew it to be unnecessary.—We continue to receive proofs of the growing attachment of our Indian neighbours, and of their disposition to place all their interests under the patronage of the United States. These dispositions are inspired by their confidence in our justice, and in the sincere concern we feel for their welfare. And as long as we discharge these high and honourable functions with the integrity and good faith which alone can entitle us to their continuance, we may expect to reap the just reward in their peace and friendship.—The expedition of Messrs. Lewis and Clarke for exploring the River Missouri, and the best communications from that to the Pacific Ocean, has had all the success which could have been expected. They have traced the Missouri nearly to its source, descended the Columbia to the Pacific Ocean, ascertained, with accuracy, the geography of that interesting communication across our continent, learned the character of the country, of its commerce and inhabitants: and, it is but justice to say, that Messrs. Lewis and Clarke, and their brave companions, have, by this arduous service, deserved well of their country.—The attempt to explore the Red River, under the direction of Mr. Freeman, though conducted with a zeal and prudence meriting entire approbation, has not been equally successful. After proceeding up it about six hundred miles, nearly as far as the French settlements had extended, while the country was in their possession, our geographers were obliged to

return, without completing their work.—Very useful additions have also been made to our knowledge of the Mississippi, by Lieut. Pike, who has ascended it to its source, and whose journal and map, giving the details of his journey, will shortly be ready for communication to both Houses of Congress. Those of Messrs. Lewis, Clarke, and Freeman, will require further time to be digested and prepared. These important surveys, in addition to those before possessed, furnish materials for commencing an accurate map of the Mississippi and its western waters. Some principal rivers, however, remain still to be explored, towards which the authorisation of Congress, by moderate appropriations, will be requisite.—I congratulate you, Fellow-Citizens, on the approach of the period at which you may interpose your authority constitutionally, to withdraw the citizens of the United States from all further participation in those violations of human rights, which have been so long continued on the unoffending inhabitants of Africa, and which the morality, the reputation, and the best interests of our country, have long been eager to proscribe. Although no law you may pass can take prohibitory effect till the first day of the year 1808, yet the intervening period is not too long to prevent, by timely notice, expeditions which cannot be completed before that day.—The receipts of the Treasury, during the year ending on the 30th day of September last, have amounted to near fifteen millions of dollars; which have enabled us, after meeting the current demands, to pay two millions seven hundred thousand dollars of the American claims, in part of the price of Louisiana; to pay, of the funded debt, upwards of three millions of principal, and nearly four of interest; and, in addition, to reimburse, in the course of the present month, near two millions of five and a half per cent. stock. These payments and reimbursements of the funded debt, with those which had been made in the four years and a half preceding, will, at the close of the present year, have extinguished upwards of twenty-three millions of principal.—The duties composing the Mediterranean fund will cease, by law, at the end of the present session. Considering however, that they are levied chiefly on luxuries, and that we have an impost on salt, a necessary of life, the free use of which otherwise, is so important, I recommend to your consideration the suppression of the duties on salt, and the continuation of the Mediterranean fund, instead thereof, for a short time; after which, that also will become unnecessary

for any purpose now within contemplation.—When both of these branches of revenue shall, in this way, be relinquished, there will still, ere long, be an accumulation of monies in the Treasury, beyond the instalment of public debt, which we are permitted by contract to pay. They cannot, then, without a modification assented to by the public creditors, be applied to the extinguishment of this debt, and complete liberation of our revenues, the most desirable of all objects. Nor, if our peace continues, will they be wanting for any other existing purpose.—The question, therefore, now comes forward, to what other object shall those surplusses be appropriated, and the whole surplus of impost, after the entire discharge of the public debt, and during those intervals when the purposes of war shall not call for them? Shall we suppress the impost, and give that advantage to foreign over domestic manufactures? On a few articles of more general and necessary use, the suppression, in due season, will doubtless be right; but the great mass of the articles on which impost is paid, are foreign luxuries, purchased by those only who are rich enough to afford themselves the use of them.—Their patriotism would certainly prefer its continuance, and application to the great purposes of the public education, roads, rivers, canals, and such other objects of public improvement, as it may be thought proper to add to the constitutional enumeration of federal powers. By these operations, new channels of communication will be opened between the States; the lines of separation will disappear, their interests will be identified, and their union cemented by new and indissoluble ties. Education is here placed among the articles of public care, not that it would be proposed to take its ordinary branches out of the hands of private enterprise, which manages so much better all the concerns to which it is equal: but a public institution can alone supply those sciences, which, though rarely called for, are yet necessary to complete the circle, all the parts of which contribute to the improvement of the country, and some of them to its preservation.—The subject is now proposed for the consideration of Congress, because, if approved, by the time the State Legislatures shall have deliberated on this extension of the federal trusts, and the laws shall have passed, and other arrangements made for their execution, the necessary funds will be on hand, and without employment. I suppose an amendment of the constitution, by consent of the States,

necessary; because the objects now recommended are not among those enumerated in the constitution, and to which it permits the public monies to be applied.—The present consideration of a national establishment, for education, particularly, is rendered proper by this circumstance; also, that if Congress, approving the proposition, shall yet think it more eligible to found it on a donation of lands, they have it now in their power to endow it with those which will be among the earliest to produce the necessary income. This foundation would have the advantage of being independent on war, which may suspend other improvements by requiring for its own purposes, the resources destined for that.—This fellow-citizens, is the state of the public interests, at the present moment, and according to the information now possessed.—But such is the situation of the nations of Europe, and such, too, the predicament in which we stand with some of them, that we cannot rely, with certainty, on the present aspect of our affairs, that may change from moment to moment, during the course of your Session, or after you shall have separated. Our duty is, therefore, to act upon the things as they are, and to make a reasonable provision for whatever they may be. Were armies to be raised whenever a speck of war is visible in our horizon, we never should have been without them. Our resources would have been exhausted on dangers which have never happened, instead of being reserved for what is really to take place. A steady, perhaps a quickened pace in preparations for the defence of our sea-port towns and waters, an early settlement of the most exposed and vulnerable parts of the country, a militia so organised, that its affective portions can be called to any point in the Union, or volunteers instead of them, to serve a sufficient time, are means which may always be ready, yet never preying upon our resources, until actually called into use. They will maintain the public interests, while a more permanent force shall be in a course of preparation. But much will depend on the promptitude with which those means can be brought into activity. If war be forced upon us, in spite of our long and vain appeals to the justice of nations, rapid and vigorous movements in its outset, will go far towards securing us in its course and issue, and towards throwing its burdens on those who render necessary the resort from reason to force.—The result of our negotiation, or such incidents in their

course, as may enable us to infer their probable issue: such further movements also on our Western frontier as may shew whether war is to be pressed there, while negotiation is protracted elsewhere, shall be communicated to you from time to time, as they become known to me, with whatever other information I posses, or may receive, which may aid your deliberation on the great national interests committed to your charge.—TH. JEFFERSON.

CONTINENTAL WAR.—*Forty-seventh Bulletin of the Grand French Army.*

Pultusk.—The affair of Czarnowo, that of Naslesk and Kursomb, that of the cavalry and Lapoczyn, have been followed by that of Pultusk, and by the complete and precipitate retreat of the Russian army, which has finished the present year's campaign.—Marshal Lannes first arrived on the morning of the 26th, directly opposite to Pultusk, where, during the night, the whole of Gen. Benningsen's corps had assembled. The Russian division, which had been defeated at Nasielsk, had arrived about two in the morning at the camp of Pultusk, with the third division of Marshal Davoust's corps in close pursuit of them. At ten o'clock Marshal Lannes began the attack, having his first line composed of the division of Suchet, the second of Gazan's, and that of Oudin, of the 3d light corps under the command of Gen. Dauttane, on his left wing. The engagement was obstinate; after various occurrences, the enemy was completely routed. The 17th regiment of light infantry, and the 34th, covered themselves with glory. Generals Vedel and Claperede were wounded. General Treilhard, commandant of the light cavalry; Gen. Bouslard, commandant of a brigade of dragoons under Gen. Becker; and also Col. Barthelemy, of the 15th dragoons, were wounded with grape shot.—Voisin, Aid-de-Camp to Marshal Lannes; and M. Curial, Aid-de-Camp to General Suchet, were killed, and both have fallen with glory. Marshal Lannes was likewise grazed by a ball. The fifth corps of the army gave a proof of every thing that could be expected from the superiority of the French infantry over that of other nations. Marshal Lannes, though he had been for six days indisposed, persisted in following the corps. The 85th regiment sustained several charges of the enemy's cavalry with great coolness and success. During the night the enemy beat a retreat, and reached Ostrolenka.

Forty-eighth Bulletin of the Grand French Army.

Warsaw, Jan. 3.—Gen. Corbineau, Aid-de-Camp to the Emperor, had set off from Pultusk, in pursuit of the enemy, with three regiments of light cavalry. After occupying Brok, he reached Ostrowiel, on the 1st inst. On his march he picked up 400 Russian soldiers, several officers, and a great quantity of baggage waggons.—Marshal Soult, with three brigades of light horse, part of Lasalle's division, has taken a position along the banks of the little river Orcye, in order to cover the cantonments of the army.—Marshal Ney, the Prince of Ponte Corvo, and Marshal Bessieres, have cantoned their troops on the left bank.—The light corps, under Marshals Soult, Davoust, and Lannes, continue to occupy Pultusk and the banks of the Bug.—The enemy's army continues to retreat. The Emperor arrived at Warsaw on the 2d of Jan.—We have had snow and frost for two days in continuance; but it has begun again to thaw, and the roads which were becoming somewhat better, are now as bad as before.—Prince Borgheze has incessantly been at the head of the 1st regiment of carbineers, which he commands. The brave carbineers and cuirassiers testified the most anxious desire to meet the enemy; but the division of dragoons which came first into action, by carrying every thing before them, left the former no opportunity of attacking the enemy.—His Majesty has appointed Gen. Lariboissiere a general of division, and given him the command of the artillery of the guards. He is an officer of the highest merit.—The troops of the Grand Duke of Wurtzburgh compose the garrison of the city of Berlin. They consist of two regiments which make an excellent appearance.—The corps under Prince Jerome continues to besiege Breslau. That beautiful city is in ashes. A disposition to wait the course of events, and the hope of being relieved by the Russians, have prevented the garrison from surrendering, but the siege makes progress. The Bavarian and Wurtemburgh troops have merited the praise of Prince Jerome, and the esteem of the French army.—The Governor of Silesia had collected the garrisons of the fortresses not yet blockaded, and formed out of them an army of 80,000 men, with which force he had commenced his march to interrupt the operations of the army besieging Breslau.—Against this force Gen. Hedouville, the chief of Prince Jerome's staff, detached Gen. Montbrun, commandant of the Wurtemburghers, and Gen. Minucci, commandant

of the Bavarians. They came up with the Prussians at Strenien, put them to flight, and took 400 men, 600 horses, and several convoys of provisions, which the enemy intended to send into the fortress. Major Herscher, at the head of 150 of Leiningen's light horse, attacked two Prussian squadrons, and completely routed them, making 36 of them prisoners.

DOMESTIC OFFICIAL PAPERS.

CAPTURE OF CURACOA.—*From the London Gazette Extraordinary Sunday, Feb. 22, 1807. Concluded from page 672.*

No. 2.—Curacoa, Jan. 1, 1807.—Preliminary articles of the capitulation agreed upon by Charles Brisbane, Esq. captain of his Majesty's ship Arethusa, and senior officer of a squadron of his Majesty's ships at Curacoa, on the one part; and by his Exc. Pierre Jean Changuion, Governor of the Island of Curacoa and its dependencies, on the other.—Article 1. The Fort Republique shall immediately be surrendered to the British force; the garrison shall march out with the honours of war, lay down their arms, and become prisoners of war. Answer. Granted.—Art. 2. The Dutch garrison at Curacoa shall be prisoners of war, and by his Britannic Majesty sent to Holland, not to serve this war before they shall be regularly exchanged; and for the due performance of this article the officers pledge their word of honour. Answer. Granted.—Art. 3. The same terms as in the above article are granted to the officers and people of the Dutch men of war. Answer. Granted.—Art. 4. All the civil officers may remain at their respective appointments, if they think proper; and those who choose shall be sent by his Britannic Majesty to Holland. Answer. Granted.—Art. 5. The burghers, merchants, planters, and other inhabitants, without difference of colour or opinion, shall be respected in their persons and property, provided they take the oath of allegiance to his Britannic Majesty. Answer. Granted, neutral property being respected.—Art. 6. All the merchants' vessels, with their cargoes, in the harbour, of whatsoever nation they belong to, shall be in the possession of their proper owners. Answer. Not granted.—Art. 7. A definitive capitulation shall be signed upon this basis in Fort Amsterdam. Answer. Granted.

Curacoa, Jan. 2, 1807.—The foregoing Articles having this day been mutually read and agreed to, this capitulation is become definitive. Signed on the one part by C. BRISBANE. Signed on the other part by his Excellency, P. J. CHANGUION.

A list of killed and wounded on board his Majesty's squadron under my command, at the capture of the Island of Curacoa, on the 1st of January, 1807. Arethusa, 2 seamen killed, 5 seamen wounded.—Latona, 1 seaman killed, 2 seamen wounded.—Anson, none killed, 7 seamen wounded.—Fisgard, none killed, none wounded.—Total, 8 seamen killed, 14 seamen wounded. (Signed) C. BRISBANE.

Curacoa, Jan. 3, 1807.—Lists of killed and wounded on board the Hastlar frigate, Surinam sloop, and Flying Fish schooner.—Hastlar, C. J. Evertz, commandant, killed; G. B. Z. Gerond, second purser, ditto; A. Graaf, chief mate, badly wounded; J. J. N. Giblesperd, steward, killed; W. Maubers, seaman, ditto; H. Driel, seaman, ditto.—Surinam, Jan Van Nes, captain, dangerously wounded; Jean Baptiste, lieut. do; G. B. Baltner, Midshipman, dangerously wounded; Arend Arens, seaman, ditto; Ferdinand Ballatin, seaman, ditto (since dead).—Flying Fish, G. H. V. A. Hinget, gunner, dead; M. S. Giblesperd, seaman, wounded.

By Charles Brisbane, Esq. Captain of his Majesty's ship Arethusa, and senior officer of a squadron of his Majesty's ships employed at Curacoa.

His Exc. Lieut. Gen. Changuion, Governor and Commander in Chief of the Island of Curacoa and its Dependencies, having refused to take the oath of allegiance to his Britannic Majesty, and surrendered himself prisoner of war, I have thought proper to appoint myself governor of the said island and its dependencies, until the pleasure of the commander in chief is made known; and I do hereby appoint myself accordingly.—Given under my hand at Curacoa, this 4th day of Jan. 1807. (Signed) C. BRISBANE.

By Charles Brisbane, Esq. Captain of his Majesty's ship Arethusa, and senior officer of his Britannic Majesty's squadron in Curacoa harbour.

Whereas this island and its dependencies have surrendered to the arms of his Britannic Majesty, as appears by the capitulation which has been signed by his Exc. Pierre Jean Changuion and me on the 1st instant, I therefore hereby require, that all the burghers and inhabitants of this island shall meet on Wednesday next, the 7th instant, at ten o'clock in the morning, at the Government House, in order to take the oath of allegiance to his Britannic Majesty aforesaid.—Those who belong to the militia companies will receive further orders from their major, and are to conduct themselves accordingly.—All those who fill public offices, of whatsoever nature they may be, and all such as do not

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belong to the militia companies, are also required to meet at the Government House, at the hour, and for the purpose aforesaid.—I expect that the burghers and inhabitants of this island will conduct themselves in such a manner as to deserve my protection and favour; and I, on my part, shall not fail, as far as in my power lies, to promote the happiness and welfare of this island, and its inhabitants; and I flatter myself, that my endeavours, in this case, will be crowned with the gracious approbation of my Sovereign; and, I hope, to the satisfaction of the inhabitants of this island and its dependencies.—Given under my hand, on board his Majesty's ship *Arethusa*, in the harbour of Curacoa, this 5th day of Jan. 1807. (Signed) C. BRISBANE.

CAPTURE OF ALEXANDRIA. *From the London Gazette, Downing Street, May 9, 1807.*

A dispatch, of which the inclosed is a copy, has been received this day at the office of Viscount Castlereagh, one of his Majesty's principal Secretaries of State, from Major-General Fraser, dated Alexandria, the 25th of March, 1807, addressed to the Rt. Hon. William Windham:

Alexandria, March 25, 1807.

Sir,—It is with much satisfaction I have the honour to inform you, that, in the afternoon of the 20th current, the town and fortresses of Alexandria, with two Turkish frigates and a corvette, surrendered to his Majesty's arms by capitulation; and that they were taken possession of on the memorable morning of the 21st, by the troops under my command.—You are already apprised of my having been detached on this service, with a body of troops from Messina, by his Excellency General Fox, under convoy of his Majesty's ships *Tigre* and *Apollo*; and the *Wizard* sloop was sent forward by Captain Hallowell, to get intelligence from Major Misset, whom I had been, by my instructions, directed to consult as to the best plan of operations for effecting the purposes of the expedition.—I have now to acquaint you, that in the night of the 7th inst. (the day after we sailed,) the *Apollo* frigate, with nineteen transports out of thirty three, which conveyed the troops, parted company, and that the other fourteen, with the *Tigre*, came to an anchor to the westward of Alexandria, on the 16th.—On our getting near the land we saw the *Wizard*, and Captain Palmer immediately brought me the intelligence he had received from Major Misset, together with a letter from him, stating that he had not come off himself, thinking his

presence in Alexandria absolutely necessary to counteract the intrigues of the French Consul, who was endeavouring to prevail upon the Governor to admit a body of Albanians, from Rosetta, to assist in the defence of the place.—He earnestly recommended me to land the troops immediately, as the inhabitants were well affected towards us, and that he had sanguine hopes we should be able to get possession of it without firing a shot. Before I determined, however, upon this measure, I deemed it prudent to acquaint Major Misset with the very diminished state of my force, and I therefore sent in my aid-de-camp, Captain A'Court, of the 31st regiment, with a flag of truce to him, with a detailed account of it, and at the same time, a manifesto to the Governor and inhabitants, (a copy of which I enclose,) which had not the desired effect, but, on the contrary, treated with contempt. The Major, however, in reply, strongly urged my immediate landing; still repeating that we should not meet with any resistance, and that my doing so would be the only means of preventing the garrison being reinforced by the Albanians, who had actually been sent for, and might be expected in the course of twenty-four hours.—These considerations led me to follow his advice, and accordingly I landed that evening (the 17th) as many troops as our small number of boats could convey, a few miles to the eastward of Marabout, without opposition, though I could only take up a position for the night; as before the next landing could be effected, such a surf had arisen on the beach, as totally to prevent the second division from approaching the shore.—The next morning, however, with infinite difficulty and risk they were landed; but finding my situation now, from the increased height of the surf and appearance of the weather, to be very precarious, both with respect to getting provisions or stores on shore, or having any communications with the transports, I determined at all hazards to force my way to the western side, where I could receive supplies from Aboukir Bay, at the same time resolving to attempt (passing) to get into the town, even with the small force I had, and push my way, if possible, into the forts that commanded it, a matter I had reason to believe from Major Misset and others, would not be very difficult to accomplish.—I therefore moved forward about eight o'clock in the evening of the 18th, and in order to force a passage I made a deep ditch in front of it, (that had been thrown up by the Turks, as a defence against

the Mamelukes and Arabs on the western side) stretching from Fort des Bains to Lake Mareotis, strengthened by 3 batteries mounting 8 guns, exclusive of Fort des Bains on its right flank, mounting thirteen guns.— This we effected with very little loss, though under a heavy fire of cannon and musketry, and proceeded within a few yards of Pompey's Gate, where we found the garrison prepared to receive us, the Gate barricaded, and the walls lined with troops and armed inhabitants: this, added to the smallness of my force, (not exceeding one thousand men of all descriptions,) led me to think the risk too great, and I determined to proceed to the westward, as I had originally intended, where I arrived in the morning of the 19th, and took up my position on the ground the British troops occupied in the action of the 21st, immediately sending detachments to take possession of Aboukir Castle, and the Cut between the Lakes Maadie and Mareotis, by which communication the reinforcement of Albanians was expected in Alexandria; in both these attempts we succeeded.— The next day, the 20th, I sent in (by a friendly Arab that had stolen out of the town, and joined us) a manifesto, addressed to the inhabitants, warning them of the danger of implicating friends and foes in the event of taking the place by assault, and urging them to force the governor to capitulate. This had the desired effect, a flag of truce was sent out, and a capitulation, (of which I herewith inclose a copy) was agreed to and signed.— Although this service has fortunately not been of long duration; yet, from the scantiness of our numbers, and the scarcity of all sorts of supplies, as well military stores as provisions, (which the boisterous state of the weather completely prevented our receiving) our situation was, for some time, rather critical; and I am happy to have it in my power to bear testimony to the patience and cheerfulness with which the troops bore every privation, and the ardour and spirit they shewed in the attack of the enemy's works, as well as the inclination and wish they displayed to have stormed the place, had I deemed that step adviseable.— To Major-General Wauchope, the hon. Brigadier-General Stuart, and Colonel Oswald, who landed with, and accompanied me, I feel myself under great obligations, for their exertions and assistance in carrying on the service; and I am much indebted to Lieut-General, and Captain Green, acting as deputy quarter-master general, for the

great attention and zeal shewn by them in forwarding and executing the duties of their respective departments; and I think it but justice to Captain Pym, and to the officers and men of the detachment of the Royal Artillery, that was with me, to mention the very great zeal and alacrity which they displayed on every occasion, which I am confident would have been equally conspicuous on the part of Captain Burgoyne and the officers of the engineers, had circumstances permitted them to have acted.— To Captain Hallowell, and the officers and seamen of his Majesty's ship *Tigre*, I cannot sufficiently express my acknowledgments for the assistance they afforded me, and for the readiness with which they stood forward on all occasions. Captain Hallowell marched with me to the attack of the enemy's entrenchments, and to the very gates of the city, and remained on shore until the place surrendered; from his advice and legal knowledge, I derived useful information—Capt. Withers, of the royal navy, agent of transports, is also entitled to praise, for his activity in landing the troops, and for the exertions he afterwards made for supplying them with provisions.— I send you herewith a return of the killed, wounded, and missing, together with returns of prisoners made, and of the public stores of different descriptions found in the several batteries and magazines—I have the honour to be, &c. (Signed) A. M. FRAZER, Maj. Gen.— P. S. The Apollo, with the nineteen missing transports, came to anchor in Aboukir Bay, on the morning of the 20th, and Sir J. Duckworth's squadron arrived here on the 22d.— It is but due to Lieut. Hunter, and a small detachment of the 20th light dragoons, who were landed without their horses or arms, to mention the zeal and spirit with which they volunteered their services, and carried the scaling ladders, on the night of the 18th.

Articles of the capitulation for the surrender of the city of Alexandria. Said Nahamed Naim Effendi being commissioned by his Excellency Emen Bey, the Governor, and Hagg Mahamet Katto, and Sieg Ibrahim, Chieftain of the people, accompanied by Signor Antonio Godard, propose to place the city and forts in the possession of the commanders in chief of the land and naval forces of his Britannic Majesty, his Excellency Major General Frazer, and Captain Hallowell, upon the conditions hereafter to be mentioned.

To be continued.